

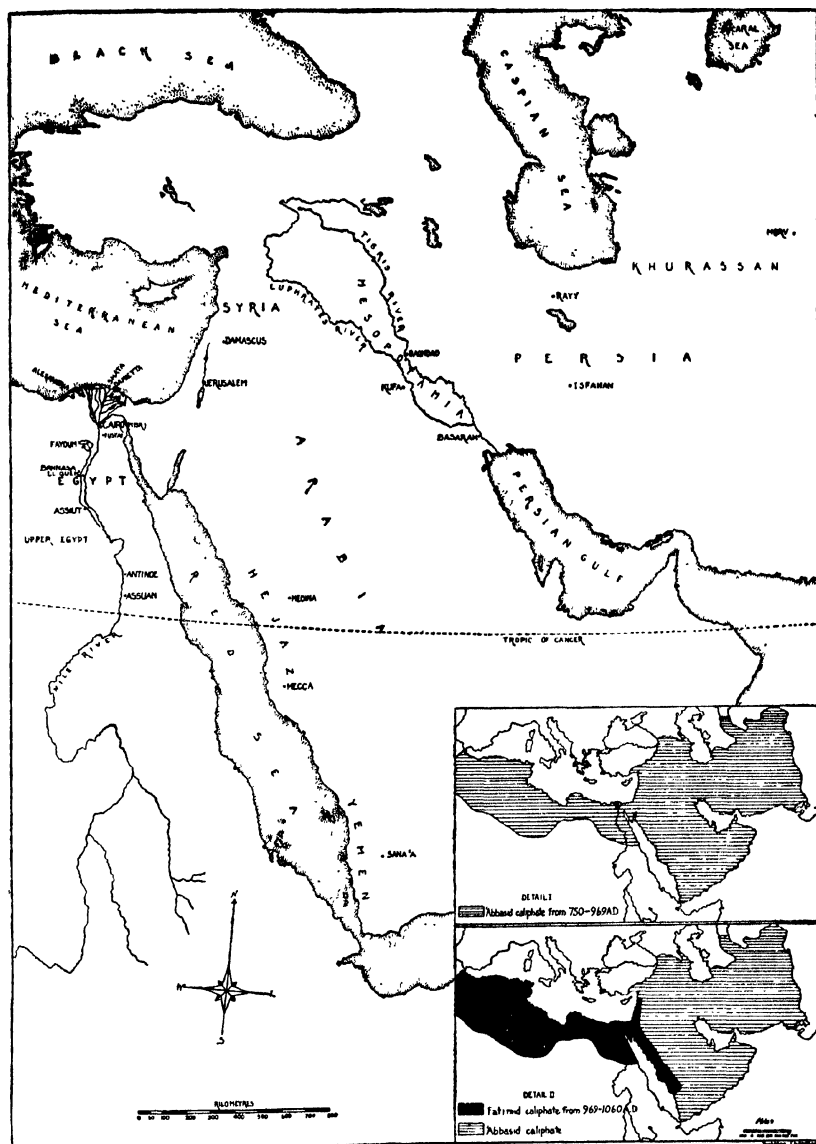
A STUDY OF
SOME EARLY ISLAMIC TEXTILES

in
The Museum of Fine Arts
Boston

BY
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IMPORTANT SITES IN THE HISTORY OF ISLAMIC TEXTILES.

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FOREWORD.

This study is a brief catalogue of representative types of Islamic textiles dating from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries of the Christian era and chosen from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Most of the examples are of tapestry-weaving and embroidery, with a few printed stuffs which have been included because of their relation to the other objects. In order to limit the subject, we have entirely excluded woven silks and brocaded woollens. It is to be regretted that it has been impossible to include a group of Islamic textiles presented by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jackson Holmes after the Catalogue was already in press.

Particular thanks are due to Miss Gertrude Townsend for her assistance and advice in the preparation of the manuscript; and to Dr. Richard Ettinghausen, M. Gaston Wiet, Dr. Zaky Hassan, Dr. Carl Johan Lamm, M. R. Pfister, Mr. Rhuvon Guest, and Miss Florence Day, for their unfailing generosity in suggesting attributions or reading inscriptions. Dr. Zaky Hassan has, furthermore, read the manuscript and offered many important corrections and additions; and we are fortunate in having had the advantage of his special knowledge in this field.

All measurements are in meters.

SECTION ONE. INTRODUCTION.

In a discussion of Islamic art, Mesopotamia seems an excellent place to begin, not only because it was the birthplace of the culture of Islam, but because of the wide kingdom and influence of the caliphs of Baghdad from the eighth to the tenth centuries. The brilliance of their court is still vivid to us today through the legends of *The Thousand and One Nights*. And it is both surprising and important to consider the simple origin of this empire which has become a symbol for splendor and cultural sophistication.

The Arabs who came from the Hedjaz to conquer the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean in the seventh century were little more than nomad tribesmen, bringing with them only the most rudimentary ideas of art, but inspired by the very strong religious fervor of Muhammad, the founder of Islam.¹ The countries which they conquered were, on the other hand, for the most part highly civilized. Mesopotamia had been swept over by the Greek and Roman Empires and bore a strong stamp of both. In Egypt the

¹ Muhammad ("The Praised"), founder of the faith which bears his name, was born in A. D. 570 in Mecca, which was the commercial capital of Arabia, as well as the center of the pagan pilgrimages and festivals. Until he was forty years old he led the usual life of a merchant. Then he had the first of his "Revelations from God," which came to him in a trance, and were written down and gathered together into the *Qur'an* ("The Reading"). This is the holy book of the Muhammadans. The first to accept his faith were 'Ali (his cousin and husband of his daughter Fatima) and Abu Bekr (the first *Caliph* or "Successor"). The Believers were furiously persecuted in Mecca, and in A. D. 622 they migrated to Yathreb (afterwards known as *Medinat-un-Nabi*, "City of the Prophet," and hence Medina) where they were received with enthusiasm. The Migration (or *Hijra*) marks the beginning of the prophet's success, and the year of the Migration (*anno hegræ* or A. H.) marks the beginning of the Muhammadan calendar. In A. D. 630 Muhammad and his followers made a triumphant return to Mecca. After his death in A. D. 632 the Arab conquest continued rapidly. Medina remained the capital, and the first four caliphs were: Abu Bekr, 'Omar, 'Othman, and 'Ali. Persia was taken in A. D. 635, Jerusalem in A. D. 637, and Egypt in A. D. 641, and governors were appointed. In A. D. 661 Mo'awiya I, governor of Syria, caused Hassan, son of 'Ali, to give up all rights to the caliphate, and founded the Omayyad dynasty with its capital in Damascus. The Omayyads made the title of caliph hereditary. In A. D. 750 the Omayyads were supplanted by the 'Abbasids (descended from 'Abbas, uncle of Muhammad); under Mansur, second 'Abbasid caliph, Baghdad was built and became the capital of Islam. *Islam* is the name which Muhammad's followers gave to their religion. It means, "resignation, submission, surrender to God." A *Muslim* is a devotee of Islam.

Copts² had developed a characteristic art, tinged with elements of Graeco-Roman thought. And Persia had the legacy of the Sassanids.

For this reason it is an anomaly that the coming of the Arabs to these countries should cause, not merely a merging of the strongest features of each art, but a completely new art based upon Islamic religious precepts.

The focal point of Islamic religion was the Qur'an. It was considered a good religious act to inscribe verses from this holy book on tombs, on public buildings, or even on garments.³ Similarly the caliph was the ruler of the spiritual as well as the temporal kingdom of his people. Such titles as "Servant of God," "Commander of the Faithful," and *Imam* ("Leader") were reserved to him; and to the *Shiah* (partisans of 'Ali and believers in the divine right) the mere uttering of the name of their Imam was a good omen. The name of the caliph was blessed every Friday at the end of the prayers in the mosques, a custom which is still preserved in Moslem countries today; and it was also inscribed on buildings, turbans, and robes.⁴

Since the Muhammadan religion forbade the copying of human or animal figures,⁵ abstract forms and decorative inscriptions were

² *Copts*: the native population (descended from the ancient Egyptians) who had become Christians.

³ See figs. 9 and 23.

⁴ See figs. 4, 5, 6, 25, 26, 28-32, 39-43, 50, 52, and 83.

⁵ The prohibition of pictures occurs not in the Qur'an but in the *Hadith* (or mass of traditions about the prophet that sprang up after his death). In the *Mishkatu'l Masabih*, a well-known book of Sunni tradition, appear also the following statements: Muhammad cursed the painter or drawer of men and animals, and consequently they are held to be unlawful; it is unlawful for a Muhammadan to have an image of any kind in his house.

Sir Thomas Arnold discusses the whole question in his book, *Painting in Islam* (Oxford, 1928, pp. 1-40). He points out that Muhammad had no objection to the woven stuffs decorated with figures, which were in his house, so long as they did not distract him while he prayed. Captain K. A. C. Creswell (*Early Muslim Architecture* (Oxford, 1932), vol. 1, pp. 269-271) adds the story from Azraki (d. A. D. 858) that on Muhammad's triumphal entry into Mecca he commanded that all the pictures in the Ka'bah be obliterated, except for one of Jesus and Mary which he ordered to be saved. This would indicate that portraits, as such, were not denounced by Muhammad. Prof. Creswell adds the further evidence that John, Patriarch of Damascus (d. A. D. 754), does not mention this prohibition, but that it is mentioned by Abu Qurra, contemporary of Harun el Raschid. From this and other testimony he concludes that the prohibition of portrait painting does not begin until the end of the eighth century, and that it was probably Jewish in origin. M. Gaston Wiet further covers the question in: Hauteceur & Wiet, *Les Mosquées du Caire* (Cairo, 1932), vol. 1, pp. 168 sq.

the only ornaments allowed to the people. In the Moslem court scribes and calligraphers held an exalted place, and since artists spent all their ingenuity in developing the full decorative qualities of the written word, their art reached a very high standard indeed.

Because of this very prohibition, there are no reproductions available in any form of art from the early years of Islam showing exactly how this ornament was used on garments.⁶ However in the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt (A. D. 969-1171) this strictness was relaxed a little, and occasional human figures do appear, as in figure 56. In figure 95, a panel of eleventh century wood-carving from the Kalawun palace of the Fatimids, we may see the general form of the garment worn, and note that it was short with flowing sleeves.⁷ In figures 96 to 98, three fragments of eleventh century ceramics from Egypt, we may see the decorative inscriptions as they appeared on turbans and sleeve-bands. Figure 99, a manuscript page from eleventh to twelfth century Egypt, shows, very completely, tiraz on sleeve-bands and turban. And in figure 100, a thirteenth century manuscript page from Mesopotamia, the same type of garment again appears, with a similar arrangement of decoration.⁸

The prohibition of animal figures was treated rather less strictly than that of human figures, so that animals and birds do appear consistently in decoration, always in a more or less conventionalized form.

Calligraphy.

The Arabic script is of two main types: *Kufic*,⁹ the square, angular writing, which has generally been considered to be the

⁶ Human figures do appear in the frescoes of the early eighth century palace of Qusayr 'Amra in Syria (cf. Creswell, *op. cit.*, plates 49 and 50), but they are still very classical in treatment. Others, more in the Sassanian manner, are in the ninth century frescoes of the palaces and mosque of Samarra (cf. Ernst Herzfeld, *Die Malereien von Samarra* (Berlin, 1927), plates 1-3, 6, 9, 12-14, 16, 18-21, 25, 27, 30-32, 35, 36, 41, 46, 52-54, 60-63, 65, 67-71.

⁷ Cf. also G. Marçais, "Les Figures d'Hommes et de Bêtes dans les Bois Sculptés d'Epoque Fatimite Conservés au Musée Arabe du Caire" (*Mélanges Maspero*, vol. 1).

⁸ Also cf. Marçais and Wiet, *Le 'Voile de Sainte Anne' d'Apt*, pp. 1-18. For a complete woven silk garment, ca. A. D. 1000, cf. Persian Exhibition, London (1931), no 73, lent by the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia; illustrated by N. A. Reath and Eleanor B. Sachs, *Persian Textiles* (New Haven, 1937), plate 51.

⁹ Kufic script takes its name from the city of Kufa, famous for its learning, and the source of early manuscripts.

older, although this is not certain; and *Naskhi*,¹⁰ the round, cursive letters employed today in Arabic-speaking countries, as well as in the Persian, Afghan, Urdu, and a number of Turkish, Berber, and Malayan languages. Forms of both scripts are found in early inscriptions, although *Naskhi* is not usual in textiles before the twelfth century.¹¹

The form of the letters themselves bent to the wish of the weaver. Sometimes they became a bold procession of shafts in vivid red, green, or blue.¹² In other inscriptions the same letters were transformed into a delicate tracery of fine lines and graceful curves almost too small for the eye to distinguish.¹³ In the later inscriptions, the words were interlaced with scrolls¹⁴ and palmettes,¹⁵ which were known thereafter as "arabesques." The general tendency is for the earlier textile inscriptions (from the eighth to the eleventh centuries) to be more simple and precise, and for later inscriptions (from the eleventh century on) to be elaborate and debased.

In addition to our pleasure in the ornamental quality of these inscriptions, they serve another use in helping us to date and place the objects on which they appear; so that it is well to consider the purpose and content of the inscriptions, and the way in which they were manufactured.

Tiraz.

All decorative inscriptions on textiles are known as *tiraz*,¹⁶ from the Persian word ترازیدن ("embroidery"). Thus fundamentally a *tiraz* means any embroidered ornament on a garment. But through usage there has appeared the second meaning of any tex-

¹⁰ *Naskhi* is derived from the word نسخ "to copy," because of its use in manuscripts. Cf. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 70: "(the) Nabatean cursive script, taken from the Aramaic, developed in the third century of our era into the script of the North Arabic tongue, the Arabic of the Koran and of the present day. More particularly it was transformed into the round *naskhi* script, in distinction to the angular *Kufi* (*Kufic*)."

¹¹ Cf. B. Moritz, "Arabia," section d: Arabic Writing, in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

¹² See figs. 29-34, 39.

¹³ See figs. 4, 28, 43-45, 48.

¹⁴ See figs. 50, 53, 54, 61, 63.

¹⁵ See figs. 51 and 52.

¹⁶ For a detailed discussion of the subject, cf. A. Grohmann, "Tiraz," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

tile inscription. The word is further expanded to mean the workshop where inscribed garments were manufactured; since this last is an abbreviation of دار الطراز ("house of the tiraz"), we shall use this full term when the workshop is meant.¹⁷

Tiraz were produced in two types of workshop: the public, and the private (or royal) establishments. The public factories¹⁸ were owned by merchants who sold their goods publicly or exported them to other countries.¹⁹ The private factories,²⁰ generally placed in the palace of the ruler, were devoted to the making of garments for the royal household,²¹ and robes of honor. Such honorary robes attained great popularity as badges of merit and decorations; high officials received them on their appointment and as gifts during their service.

As we have already implied, the name of the caliph in a tiraz may indicate merely his sovereignty at the time of manufacture of the piece, and not that it is the product of his private workshop. However it frequently happens in the earlier garments that the inscriptions form a sort of weaver's mark and contain very full information indeed. And as they followed a general set form, we shall outline it briefly.

These inscriptions usually begin with the *Basmala*: "In the

¹⁷ Cf. Maqrizi, *Khitat* (ed. Wiet), vol. 3, p. 214, n. 5.

¹⁸ See fig. 48.

¹⁹ Cf. Maqrizi, *Khitat* (trans. Bouriant), part 2, p. 508: "At Shata, Difou, Damirah, Touna, and in the neighboring islands, they wove light tissues. . . . The exportation of these stuffs in Iraq produced in a year (A. D. 971) twenty to thirty thousand dinar."

²⁰ See figs. 4 and 28.

²¹ Cf. Nasiri Khosrau, *Sefer Nameh* (trans. Schefer), p. 110: "That which is woven in the workshops of the sultan is neither sold nor given. It has been recounted to me that the sovereign of Fars sent twenty thousand dinars to Tinnis in order to buy a complete garment made with the stuff reserved for the sultan. His agents stayed several years in the town without being able to make this purchase. The workmen who work for the prince are very skillful. One of them, it is said, wove a piece of stuff intended for the sultan's turban; he received for this work the sum of five thousand dinars maghreby. . . . Also at Tinnis and nowhere else they make the stuff called *bouqalemoun*, whose colour changes according to the different hours of the day. It is exported into the countries of the west and east. It has been told to me that the emperor of Greece offered one hundred towns to the sultan on condition that he receive Tinnis in exchange. The sultan rejected this proposition. The desire to possess the town which produced *quaçab* and *bouqalemoun* caused the emperor to make this demand. . . . The *quaçab* and *bouqalemoun* made for the sultan are paid for at their just value; the workmen then work for him with pleasure, in contrast to what happens in other countries where the administration or the sovereign impose duty-services on the workmen."

name of God the Compassionate the Merciful,"²² which heads most chapters of the Qur'an. The virtues of this formula as a talisman were greatly admired by pious men, who believed that it was written on Adam's side, Gabriel's wing, Solomon's seal, and the tongue of Jesus.

The *Basmala* is generally followed by the name of the caliph: his given name (*Ism*), the personal title (*Laqab*) which he assumed on his accession, the honorary titles reserved to the caliph, and such benedictory phrases as, "May God prosper him," "May God strengthen him," or "May God prolong his life."

When the *wazir's* name²³ follows that of the caliph, we may assume that the garment was produced in a royal workshop; for the wazir was the caliph's principal minister,²⁴ and it was customary for him to control the manufacture of robes of honor and sometimes the personal apparel of the caliph and his suite.

The next phrase in the inscriptions is generally: "Made in the private (royal) tiraz"²⁵ الطراز الخاص (or "the public tiraz"²⁶ الطراز العام); this is accompanied by the name of the city where the piece was made.²⁶

A complete inscription usually ends with the date of manufacture,²⁷ reckoned, of course, on the basis of the Muhammadan calendar.²⁸

²² Cf. Carra de Vaux, "Basmala," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

²³ See figs. 25 and 28.

²⁴ The traditions relate that Muhammad said: "Whosoever is in authority over Muslims, if God prosper him shall be given a virtuous wazir. The wazir shall remind him when he forgetteth his duty, and shall assist him when he doth remember it. But to a bad ruler God giveth an evil-minded wazir, who when the ruler forgetteth his duty, does not remind him of it, and when he remembereth his duty doth not assist him to perform it" (quoted in *The Dictionary of Islam* from Khalil az-Zahir).

²⁵ "Tiraz" here is used in abbreviation for "House of the tiraz."

²⁶ See figs. 4, 28, 48.

²⁷ See figs. 4, 25, 28.

²⁸ The Muhammadan calendar (designated as A. H.) begins with the *Hijra* (incorrectly called *Hegira*), Muhammad's "Migration" from Mecca in A. D. 622. The Muhammadan year is lunar and about eleven days shorter than the Christian year, a fact which must be considered when one is translated into the other.

To find the Christian date from the Muhammadan: multiply 970,224 by the Muhammadan year, point off six decimal places, and add 621.5774. The whole number will be the year A. D., and the decimal multiplied by 365 will give the day of the year. Tables for this conversion are found in: Eduard Mahler, *Tabellen der Muhammedanischen und Christlichen Zeitrechnung* (Leipzig, 1926); and Sir Wolseley Haig, *Comparative Tables of Muhammadan and Christian Dates* (London, 1932).

This form of inscription prevailed, with variations, to the time of the Fatimid caliph Mustansir (A. D. 1036-1094). But after his reign the importance of the caliph greatly diminished. This may account partly for the change of fashion during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.²⁹ The tiraz then began to consist merely of a short pious formula ("Victory from God," "The kingdom to God," or "Success and good fortune") endlessly repeated in increasingly debased calligraphy and mingled with an elaborate guilloche of scrolled bands.³⁰ This painstaking reiteration of small detail begins already to suggest the wood-carving and metal-work of the later Mameluk period.

Technical Evidence.

We have shown that there are two ways of finding the date and source of Islamic textiles: one is from the actual content of the inscription; the second is by the style of writing in the inscription and of the ornament which accompanies it. There is a third kind of evidence, equally valuable, of considering the method and material with which the garment was made. For this a short summary of technical terms will be necessary.

The ground material of the garments themselves, in most of the examples we are considering, is of *cloth*: that is, warp and weft threads passing over and under each other alternately.³¹ In some cases the warp is heavier than the weft,³² or the weft heavier than the warp,³³ and this produces a ribbed effect.

The decoration on the garments has been formed by three methods: tapestry, embroidery, and painting or printing.

²⁹ Debased Naskhi inscriptions bearing the name of the reigning caliph do, however, survive into the twelfth century; fig. 83 is an example.

³⁰ See figs. 83, 86, 87.

³¹ Cf. Nancy Andrews Reath, *The Weaves of Hand-loom Fabrics* (Philadelphia, 1927), p. 8, fig. 1.

Warp (*ibid.*, p. 7): all the threads that run parallel to the selvages and lengthwise in the fabric.

Weft (*ibid.*): all the threads that intersect the warp and run across the fabric at right angles to the selvages.

Selvages (*ibid.*): the two parallel edges of every woven fabric, consisting of a closely woven narrow border, of one or more heavier threads.

³² See figs. 1-3, etc.

³³ See figs. 5, 6, 11, 12, etc.

Tapestry is woven directly onto the warps of the ground material at the time that the textile is produced. It is a ribbed cloth technique, using wefts of more than one color. It differs from the plain cloth of the ground in that each color is woven back and forth on the warp threads only where it is needed for the pattern; the right and wrong sides of the stuff are therefore almost identical. In early Islamic tapestries no attempt is made to interlock the various wefts where the colors join, and so perpendicular slits frequently occur. These are either left to accent the pattern,³⁴ or else they are roughly sewn together after the fabric is finished.³⁵

Embroidery is applied to a previously woven ground material.³⁶ A needle is used; the threads of the pattern need not be parallel to either warp or weft of the ground; and the right and wrong sides are not interchangeable in the stitches which we are considering. The *split-stitch* is formed by inserting the needle, each time, into the center of the previous stitch; the result is very like chain-stitch. It may be used to form a straight line,³⁷ or back and forth to form a filling stitch.³⁸ *Outline-stitch* resembles split-stitch, except that the needle is not inserted into the previous stitch but enters just to one side of it; the result is a series of short, slightly diagonal stitches placed closely together, which form a narrow uninterrupted line.³⁹ When gold threads were used, a different stitch was required, since the gold was beaten onto membrane and narrow strips wound onto a silk cord,⁴⁰ which was then both clumsy and fragile and could not pass easily through the ground cloth. It was therefore sewed lightly at short intervals to the surface of the cloth with a fine silk thread, and this process is known as *couching*.⁴¹

³⁴ See figs. 48-50, etc.

³⁵ See figs. 1-3, etc.

³⁶ Reath, *ibid.*, p. 17.

³⁷ See figs. 4-9, 26, 27, 88.

³⁸ See figs. 11, 12, 88-90.

³⁹ See figs. 18, 89, 90.

⁴⁰ It is interesting to note here that in the three examples of gold thread from Mesopotamia (figs. 10, 11, 12) the membrane is wound on cream silk cord; in the one from Fatimid Egypt (fig. 49) it is on brownish silk cord (which may be merely discolored); and in the three which we have dated after the twelfth century (figs. 88-90) the cord is yellow silk.

⁴¹ See figs. 11, 12, 88-90.

Painting and printing are also generally applied to a previously woven ground material.⁴² We use the term *painting* when we believe that the color was applied with a brush or stylus,⁴³ and *printing* when a block or stencil seems to have been used.⁴⁴

The material of the threads is another helpful factor in determining the provenance of textiles. Those with a linen ground generally come from Lower Egypt; those with a wool ground seem to come from Mesopotamia, the Fayoum, and Upper Egypt; those with a silk or *mulham*⁴⁵ ground, from Persia and Mesopotamia; and with a cotton ground, from Mesopotamia and the Yemen. For the design, colored silks and wools were commonly used. When white was needed in the pattern, the workers employed undyed linen or cotton. Since cotton was very rare in Egypt, we assume that pieces containing any of this fibre were probably made elsewhere. These attributions will be considered more fully under their various sections. In all cases where there seems to be reasonable doubt as to the fibre of the thread, it has been analyzed by Mr. William Young of the Museum of Fine Arts. His results will be indicated in the catalogue.

The dyes with which the threads were colored before weaving form an additional important clue to the source of a textile. M. Pfister of the Guimet Museum has shown that the appearance of a new red dye in the textiles from Egypt coincides with the time of the Arab conquest. His research in chemical analysis has established this difference quite clearly, and, although we have not been equipped to repeat his experiments with the Boston collection, we feel that his results justify us in including in our catalogue several transitional pieces which were formerly attributed to the pre-Islamic Copts.⁴⁶

Bearing in mind these different classifications, we shall now be able to consider the transition in the design of tiraz in its various geographical groups: starting, first, with Mesopotamia, the first

⁴² For *ikat* (warp-dyed fabrics), see page 72.

⁴³ See figs. 91 and 92.

⁴⁴ Note the birds and beasts in fig. 93.

⁴⁵ For *mulham*, see page 30.

⁴⁶ Cf. R. Pfister, *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, vol. 10 (1936), pp. 1-16; 73-85. Pfister, *Teinture et Alchimie dans l'Orient Hellénistique* (Prague, 1935).

cultural center of Islam; shifting next to Egypt, as the center of Islam shifted with the rise of the Fatimids; and then discussing briefly the Yemen, because of its strong bond with Fatimid Egypt. We have not attempted to show adequately Persia's contribution to the art of textiles. Her woven silks are a subject in themselves, which has been covered amply elsewhere.

SECTION TWO. MESOPOTAMIA.

The political history of Islam in Mesopotamia begins with its conquest by the Arabs in A. D. 636. The wealthy province of the Tigris and Euphrates valley (called '*Iraq*')¹ submitted then to the caliph; Basarah was founded at the head of the Persian Gulf the same year, and Kufa in A. D. 638. The rude Arab tribesmen then swept on to the east, meeting with little resistance from the terrified Persians, and soon found themselves masters of the fabulous treasure of the Sassanids.

At first the conquerors had neither the knowledge nor the inclination to cope adequately with this new inheritance.² The humble and pious caliph 'Omar and his two successors, who held the caliphate, one in Medina and one in Kufa, were still strongly imbued with the simple religious precepts of Muhammad: the abhorrence of fine garments, splendid palaces, and rich foods and wines.

It was particularly under the Omayyads, with their capital at Damascus, that rules for the administration of the provinces were made. Mo'awiya, first Omayyad caliph (A. D. 661-680), commanded that a register should be kept of taxes and tributes in all Islamic countries; and 'Abd el Malik (A. D. 685-705) ruled that this record should be kept in the Arabic language.³ Walid I (A. D. 705-715) caused mosques to be built,⁴ which were the first to show the rudiments of Islamic architecture; and from his reign we find the oldest dated Islamic textile now known, which comes from the

¹ Cf. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 155, n. 2: "*Iraq*, probably a loan-word from Pahlawi, meaning 'lowland,' corresponds to Ar. *Sawad*, 'black land,' used to bring out the contrast with the Arabian desert."

² It is told that one of the spoils from the palace of Chosroes was a silk and gold floral carpet, sixty cubits in length and breadth; and that when this was brought to him for his use, the scrupulous caliph 'Omar ingenuously cut it into small equal pieces and divided it among the chieftains of Medina, thereby completely destroying its design. Cf. Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley, *The Saracens*, p. 62.

³ Cf. Washington Irving, *Mahomet and His Successors*, p. 585.

⁴ The reconstruction of the mosque at Medina and the mosque of 'Amr; the building of the mosques at Damascus and Diyabekr. Cf. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. 1, pp. 97-146.

year A. D. 707; the inscription states that it was made as a turban.⁵

After the 'Abbasid dynasty supplanted the Omayyads and removed the capital to Baghdad, the "profane" arts and sciences began to be sponsored by the caliph, and a consistent cultural skill quickly developed. Life in the court was built on the pattern of the old Persian kings and aspired even to outshine them in magnificence. The most famous of the 'Abbasids was Harun el Raschid ("The Just"), hero of *The Thousand and One Nights*;⁶ avid of luxury and learning, and an ardent traveler who visited most of his provinces.

If we wish to indulge our imagination, we may legitimately suppose that the earliest of our Mesopotamian textiles (figs. 1-3) were in existence during his reign; for they were certainly made about the eighth century A. D., either before or during his time; and they probably came from Mesopotamia.

Only one fragment of tiraz is now known to exist bearing the name of Harun el Raschid.⁷ But that they were the traditional type of his period is shown by Maqrizi. In his *History of Egypt* (A. D. 1417-1436) he quotes generously from the accounts of earlier writers whose work might otherwise be lost to us. He mentions two pieces of tiraz with the name of el Raschid, which were still in existence in the life-time of el Fakihi (A. D. 885). He describes them minutely,⁸ and they are most interesting since

⁵ Arab Museum, Cairo, no. 10846 (Gobelins Museum Exposition (Paris, 1935), no. 3). Cf. H. M. Hawary, *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, vol. 16 (1933-1934), pp. 62-63.

⁶ *The Thousand and One Nights* (commonly known in English as *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*) are tales of the kingdom of el Raschid, fifth 'Abbasid caliph of Baghdad (A. D. 786-809). Many of the stories have some foundation in fact, as is testified by contemporary historians. But unfortunately these colorful tales do not provide an accurate guide to life and customs in Mesopotamia in the ninth century, since they were probably not written down until the fourteenth to sixteenth century in Egypt, and contain many naïve anachronisms for the earlier period. The stories of Sheherazade are believed to be much older than Islam and, with the Book of Esther, to have a common origin in the *Hezar Afsane* ("The Thousand Tales"). Mas'udi in his *Meadows of Gold* (A. D. 956) mentions the relation of the *Hezar Afsane* to current Arabic legends. And from Maqrizi we learn that the stories of *The Thousand and One Nights*, in their spoken version, were well-known at the time of the caliph el Amir (A. D. 1097-1130). The collection first became known to Europe through the French translation of Antoine Galland (1704-1712).

⁷ Berlin Museums. Cf. E. Kuhnelt, *Islam*, vol. 14 (1925), pp. 85-86, fig. 2: "... Blessing from God to the Servant of God, Harun, Commander of the Faithful."

⁸ Maqrizi, *Khitat* (trans. Bouriant), part 2, p. 519: "El Fakihi says: I have also seen

the inscriptions are very much the type outlined in our introduction. Although there are no textiles with such inscriptions in the Museum of Fine Arts collection before the time of the caliph el Muqtadir (A. D. 908-932),⁹ we now know from Maqrizi's evidence and from textiles in other museums¹⁰ that the form was familiar as early as the eighth century. Curiously enough, the textiles described by Maqrizi were made in Egypt, although the earliest of this sort in the Boston collection come from Mesopotamia, and one (fig. 4) actually states that it was made in a royal workshop in Baghdad.

Eighth Century.

We shall now return to the evidence of the earlier pieces (figs. 1-3), three variations, in slightly different scale, of the ram motif, woven in tapestry. The ram, or ibex, was a familiar form of decoration in Persia during the Sassanian period. We find it again, a century or so later, in woven silks which are thought by some authorities to have been made in Antioch;¹¹ and we believe that our tapestry-woven versions date from the eighth century.

We are confronted with the problem of where these tapestries

a veil given by Harun el Raschid, made of *qobati* of Egypt (Egyptian linen) and bearing this inscription: 'In the name of God. Blessing from God to the caliph el Raschid, the Servant of God, Harun, Commander of the Faithful. May God honor him This is what Fadl ben el Rabi' ordered to be made for him in the tiraz of Touna in the year 190 (A. D. 806).'

Ibid., p. 666: "El Fakihi reports: I have seen one of the veils of the Commander of the Faithful, Harun el Raschid, made of *qobati* of Egypt, carrying this inscription: 'In the name of God. Blessing from God to the Servant of God, Harun, Commander of the Faithful. May God prolong his life. This is what el Fadl ben el Rabi', freedman of the Commander of the Faithful, ordered (to be made) in the tiraz of Shata It is a veil for the Ka'bah (the shrine in Mecca) The year 190 (A. D. 806).'"

⁹ See figs. 4 and 5.

¹⁰ Three eighth century tiraz in other museums are:

Arab Museum, Cairo, no. 10846 (Gob. Exp. 3); Omayyad, dated A. D. 707; (see above); linen cloth with colored tapestry band and crude black wool tapestry Kufic inscription.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no. 1314-1888; Omayyad, Marwan I (A. D. 683-685) or Marwan II (A. D. 744-750); woven silk from Akhmim with crude yellow silk embroidered Kufic inscription. Cf. Guest, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1906), pp. 390-391, no. 1.

Berlin Museums; Abbasid, Harun el Raschid (A. D. 786-809); (see above); red linen ground with silk band in center.

¹¹ Cf. O. von Falke, *Decorative Silks* (1936), fig. 25.

were made. Aside from the borders, the pieces do not at all suggest Coptic and Graeco-Roman tapestry-woven ornament of pre-Islamic Egypt. The elaborate treatment of the ram's horns and the ribbons flying from his collar are typically Sassanian in feeling, although the elements are corrupted by careless workmanship. We know that such designs were copied by western workmen.¹² But, in view of the variation of opinion as to the provenance of textiles with debased Sassanian designs, we should hesitate to set a definite attribution without the corroboration of technical evidence.

These pieces contain no linen; where white was needed in the design, undyed cotton was used entirely. We have stated in the introduction that pieces containing cotton were generally made, not in Egypt, but in Mesopotamia.¹³ There are exceptions to this rule in pre-Islamic Egypt: it is known that King Amasis (d. 525 B. C.) sent as royal gifts two garments of linen decorated with gold and cotton threads.¹⁴ This, however, merely emphasizes the point that in Egypt cotton must have been very rare and therefore reserved to the use of the ruler. Our next evidence is the testimony that we have mentioned from Maqrizi that royal tiraz of the eighth century resembled that of the tenth.

Certain pieces of the ram group are coarse in design and indifferent in construction, and all of them lack the fineness one would expect from a royal workshop in Egypt. The evidence so far is only against its having come from Egypt or a royal workshop. We have showed evidence that cotton was used in Mesopotamia; the design with its modified Sassanian elements suggests a Mesopotamian origin. Therefore until we have further evidence we shall attribute this group to Mesopotamia.

Other examples of this type are in the National Museum, Stock-

¹² Such as in the mosaic border of paired rams' heads from Antioch in the fifth century; in the Worcester Art Museum Collection. Cf. *The Dark Ages* (Worcester Art Museum, 1937), no. 11, p. 21.

¹³ Cf. R. Pfister, *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, vol. 10 (1936), pp. 80-81. Also C. J. Lamm, *Le Monde Oriental*, vol. 30 (1936), p. 56: "al Ta'alibi (d. A. D. 1038) . . . says that 'people knew that cotton belongs to Khurasan and linen to Egypt.'" The question is further discussed by Dr. C. J. Lamm in his book, *Cotton in Mediaeval Textiles of the Near East* (Paris, 1937), an important book, published after our text was in the press.

¹⁴ Herodotus, III, 47; quoted by R. Pfister, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

holm (no. 150/1935);¹⁵ the Benaki Museum, Athens; the Keleian collection;¹⁶ and the Arab Museum, Cairo (nos. 13789 and 13690). A related piece of the same period is in the Cluny Museum (no. 22.043). It is a wool tapestry of birds with Sassanian ribbons flying from their collars. M. Pfister has attributed it to Mesopotamia.¹⁷

37.380. FIGURE 1.

TAPESTRY, MESOPOTAMIAN (?).

Eighth century (?).

Warps: brown wool.

Tapestry band: of pink, deep-blue, yellow, and green wool and undyed cotton.¹⁸ Rams of cotton, on pink rectangles (.14 to .15 high); paired birds of cotton, on each side of conventional tree; on blue rectangles. Needle-weaving borders (.01 to .02 wide) of cotton and brown on pink. Blue medallions at corners.

.645 x .21.

34.120. FIGURE 2.

TAPESTRY, MESOPOTAMIAN (?).

Eighth century (?).

Warps: brown wool.

Tapestry fragment: of brown and dark-blue wool and undyed cotton.¹⁸

Ram of cotton, on brown rectangle (.155 x .1). Needle-weaving borders (.02 to .03 wide) of cotton on brown. Blue medallions at corners.

.205 x .145.

This is a single motif from such a band as figure 1.

37.446. FIGURE 3.

TAPESTRY, MESOPOTAMIAN (?).

Eighth century (?).

Ground: ribbed brown wool cloth, mostly perished.

Tapestry fragment: of pink, deep-blue, and yellow wool and undyed cotton.¹⁸ Cotton lozenge within pink lozenge, on blue rectangle (.095 x .055); paired cotton birds. Needle-weaving borders (.023 to .028 wide) of cotton on pink. Blue medallions at corners.

.145 x .093.

This is a single motif from such a band as figure 1.

¹⁵ Cf. Lamm, *Le Monde Oriental*, *op. cit.*, pp. 48 (no. 21) and 66, pl. VI d.

¹⁶ Cf. Jean Pozzi, *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, vol. 12 (1934), p. 107, fig. 15.

¹⁷ R. Pfister, *op. cit.*, p. 81, pl. 31.

¹⁸ Analyzed by Mr. William Young of the Museum of Fine Arts.

Tenth Century.

The tiraz of ninth and tenth century Mesopotamia contain the traditional form of inscription, as outlined in our introduction, and are embroidered with monochrome silk thread in split-stitch on a ground of fine-glazed cotton or *mulham*.

Mulham (ملحم meaning "half silk")¹⁹ is a delicate ribbed cloth with warps of fine raw-silk and wefts of coarser cotton. It is mentioned first by contemporary historians of the eighth and ninth centuries as a product of Merv, Khurassan, and Isfahan.²⁰ But by the tenth century it also appears as a product of Mesopotamia. The material can be easily recognized because of its shredded appearance, caused by the breaking of the fragile silk warps.²¹

The ornament during this period is generally a line of delicate stylized Kufic, characterized by the exaggerated height of the shafts of its tall letters and the pattern of small meaningless loops below. The inscription may be accompanied by a second line of infinitesimal Kufic, or imitation Kufic, running above the first line. Embroidered inscriptions of this type are generally not accompanied by bands of decoration.²²

32.109. FIGURE 4.

EMBROIDERY, MESOPOTAMIAN (BAGHDAD).

'Abbasid Period, Caliph el Muqtadir, A. D. 932.

Ground: glazed undyed cotton cloth.²³

1. Embroidered (split-stitch) Kufic inscription (.03 high); of brown silk.

¹⁹ Cf. R. P. A. Dozy, *Dictionnaire Détaillé des Noms des Vêtements chez les Arabes* (Amsterdam, 1845), p. 113, n. 9: "Suivant Motorrezi le mot ملحم désigne une sorte d'étoffe dont la trame n'est pas de soie."

²⁰ Cf. Gaston Wiet, *L'Exposition Persane de 1931*, pp. 104, 107, 112-115.

²¹ Cf. Lamm, *Le Monde Oriental*, *op. cit.*, p. 56; Lamm, *Nationalmusci Arsbok* (1934, New Series 4), pp. 16, 17, and 29, fig. 9; Pfister, *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, vol. 10 (1936), pp. 79-80, plate 32 (D2 and D3); and Florence Day, *Ars Islamica*, vol. 4 (1937), pp. 426-427, no. 6, fig. 6.

²² Two exceptions to this rule are in the Arab Museum, Cairo. No. 12298 (Gobelins Exposition Catalogue no. 82) is an embroidered tiraz on mulham ground, decorated above with a band of tapestry; the inscription states that it was made in Merv in A. D. 891 (cf. Hawary, *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte*, vol. 16, part 1, pp. 62, 69, and 70, plate 1). No. 5261 (Gobelins Exposition Catalogue no. 81, plate 7) is on a cotton ground and has two lines of embroidered tiraz (undeciphered) separated by a band of tapestry; it was probably made in Baghdad in the tenth century.

²³ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

2. Similar inscription (.004 high) running above.
.42 x .195.

Inscription: ²⁴

1. [بسم الله الـ]رحمن الرحيم وما توفيقي الا بالله عليه توكلت ...
الدائمة ... بركة من الله وسلامة وغبطة وعز للخليفة عبدالله [ا] حمد
الـ[حـ]قدر بالله [ا]مير المومنين ايده الله بعمله في طراز الخاصة بمدينة
السلام على يد ابو ... [مولى ا]مير المو[منين] سنة عشرين وثلثمائة
2. (repetition of first inscription (?)).

Translation:

1. "(In the name of) God the Compassionate the Merciful. My support is in God alone, and in Him I trust.²⁵ . . . The permanent . . . Blessing from God and peace and beatitude and glory to the caliph, the Servant of God, Hamd el Muqtadir billah, Commander of the Faithful. May God strengthen him. Made in the royal workshop in Medinat as-Salam²⁶ by the hands of Abu . . . (the freedman of) the Commander of the Faithful. In the year 320 (A. D. 932)."

Published:

Répertoire, vol. 4, no. 1233; from the Tano collection.

31.50. FIGURE 5.

EMBROIDERY, MESOPOTAMIAN.

'Abbasid Period, Caliph el Muqtadir (A. D. 908-932).

Ground: mulham.²⁷

Embroidered (split-stitch) Kufic inscription (.03 high); of dark-blue silk.²⁸

.09 x .05.

Inscription: ²⁴

... للخليفة ا [بى]جعفر الا [مام] ...

Translation:

"... to the caliph Abu Ja'far, the Imam . . ." ²⁹

²⁴ Read by Dr. Richard Ettinghausen.

²⁵ From the Qur'an, Chapter 11, verse 87.

²⁶ "The Holy City"; Baghdad.

²⁷ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

²⁸ A heart-shaped double loop at the base of the round letters closely links this piece to a fragment in the Garrett Chatfield Piers collection, New Haven, Connecticut (Yale Museum, no. 369.31).

²⁹ Abu'l Fadl Ja'far is the *Ism* (given name) of the caliph el Muqtadir.

31.49. FIGURE 6.

EMBROIDERY, MESOPOTAMIAN.

'Abbasid Period, Caliph el Radi (A. D. 934-940).

Ground: mulham.⁸⁰

Embroidered (split-stitch) Kufic inscription (.03 high); of red silk.
.11 x .11.

Inscription: ⁸¹

... [الام] ام الراضى بالله امير المومنين] ..

Translation:

"... (the Imam) el Radi billah, Commander of the Faithful . . ."

31.51. FIGURE 7.

EMBROIDERY, MESOPOTAMIAN.

'Abbasid Period, first half of tenth century.

Ground: glazed undyed cotton cloth.⁸⁰

Embroidered (split-stitch) Kufic inscription (.03 high); of dark-blue silk.
.08 x .055.

Inscription: ⁸²

... [بركه من] الله ونعمة وعز] للخذ [لمبة] ...

Translation:

"... (Blessing from) God, and prosperity and glory to the (caliph) . . ."

31.52. FIGURE 8.

EMBROIDERY, MESOPOTAMIAN.

'Abbasid Period, first half of tenth century.

Ground: glazed undyed cotton cloth.⁸⁰

Embroidered (split-stitch) Kufic inscription (.027 high); of dark-blue silk.
.19 x .09.

Inscription (written very inaccurately): ⁸³

... [العاقبة لل] متقين وصلى الله [على] محمد خاتم النبيين ...

Translation:

"... (the reward) is to the God-fearing, and the benediction of God be upon Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets . . ."⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

⁸¹ Read by Dr. Ettinghausen.

⁸² Read by M. Gaston Wiet.

⁸³ Read by Dr. C. J. Lamm.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Répertoire*, vol. 6, no. 2389.

15.761. FIGURE 9.

EMBROIDERY, MESOPOTAMIAN.

'Abbasid Period, first half of tenth century.

Ground: glazed undyed cotton cloth.⁸⁵

Embroidered (split-stitch) Kufic inscription (.04 high); of dark-blue silk. Similar simulated inscription (.004 high) running above.
.205 x .085.

Inscription: ⁸⁶

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وما توفيقي الا بالله وعليه
.....

Translation:

"In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful. My support is in God alone, and in Him. . . ." Qur'an, chapter 11, verse 87.

Published:

E. Kühnel, *Islamische Stoffe*, p. 48.

Tenth to Eleventh Century.

The three pieces which we are now considering have no inscription by which they may be dated.⁸⁷ But because of the elegance of their design and workmanship and their lavish use of gold, all three suggest a source in the royal workshops of Baghdad, some time in the tenth to eleventh centuries.

The tapestry band (figure 10), with its delicate mosaic of color, shows a slight affinity with some of the rich stuffs made in Egypt under the Fatimid caliph el Mustansir (A. D. 1036-1094). The pink silk ground, however, precludes the possibility of an Egyptian origin. The narrow borders in "pearl" motif are a survival from Sassanid Persia; and since the general trend in design, in the early years of Islam, seems to be from east to west, this piece may be a predecessor of the Mustansir group and date slightly earlier than the eleventh century.

The two embroideries (figures 11 and 12) are very closely inter-related. Both are on a mulham ground, worked with colored silks in split-stitch, and couched gold. If anything, these two pieces are slightly earlier than the tapestry band.

⁸⁵ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

⁸⁶ Read by Dr. Ernst Kühnel.

⁸⁷ A companion-piece to figure 11, in the Motassian collection, has a fragment of inscription, but it is, as yet, undeciphered. For this, and for a complete discussion of our figure 11, cf. Wiet, *Ars Islamica*, vol. 4 (1937), pp. 54-64.

The finesse and sophistication of figure 11 rival any of the finest woven silks of the same period. In fact, the method of weaving could not quite achieve the amazing variation and facility of this piece, which adapts itself so perfectly to the medium of embroidery. In our portion of the stuff alone, we find a large peacock, a lion, a griffon, and smaller birds and animals, none repeating any of the wealth of detail of the others. The mane of the lion forms a complex scale-pattern; the tail of the peacock has a serrated border; and the flank of the griffon becomes a classic arabesque.

The constant feature of the design, which preserves its unity, is the series of affronted spotted beasts which fill the border of each large roundel. The treatment of these beasts and the general character of the design as a whole is strikingly reminiscent of a woven silk in the Russian Museums.³⁸ The method of drawing the waving tails of the lions in the small roundels is also very similar to this piece. The same convention may be noticed again in a painted textile in the Metropolitan Museum.³⁹

Finally, we see the same sort of lions again in figure 12. These lions, once more, are enlivened by the arabesque at the flank, the scale-pattern at the mane, and the palmette at the tip of the waving tail; another amusing mannerism is the long and elaborate lashes which fringe the eyes.

M. Wiet has pointed out that the heavy incrustation of gold in such embroideries makes it impracticable for us to think of them as garments, even as robes of state. It is his opinion that they are undoubtedly wall-hangings from the palace of the caliphs of Baghdad.⁴⁰

³⁸ This important similarity has been discovered by Dr. Lamm. Cf. N. N. Sobolef, *Otcherki Po Istorii Ukrasheneye Tkany* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1934), p. 48, figs. 13 and 19. Dr. Lamm has also noted the resemblance of the Boston piece to the Thomas à Becket chasuble in the Cathedral of Fermo; illustrated in color in: *L'Antico Tessuto d'Arte Italiano nella Mostra del Tessile Nazionale* (Rome, 1937-1938), p. 23, no. 43, plates 4 and 5; described as being embroidered in silk and gold. It is attributed to Baghdad, 12th century; but Dr. Lamm believes that it is probably 11th century.

³⁹ No. 31.106.64. Cf. M. S. Dimand, *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 27 (1932), pp. 95 and 96, fig. 4.

⁴⁰ A splendid and complete embroidery of a related type, from twelfth century Sicily, is the coronation mantle of Roger II, in the Weltliche Schatzkammer, Vienna. Cf. Arpad Weixlgärtner, *Guide to the Weltliche Schatzkammer* (Vienna, 1929), p. 63, fig. 11; Dr. Franz Bock, *Die Kleinodien des Heil. Römischen Reiches* (Vienna, 1864), plate 6, text pp. 27-31; Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, plate facing p. 614.

35.55. FIGURE 10.

TAPESTRY, MESOPOTAMIAN (BAGHDAD).

Tenth to eleventh century.

Ground: ribbed pink silk cloth.⁴¹ Selvage at left (one paired warp).

Tapestry band (.055 wide): of green, blue, and cream silk, and gold (membrane wound on cream silk cord).⁴²

.14 x .123.

37.103. FIGURE 11.

EMBROIDERY, MESOPOTAMIAN (BAGHDAD).

Probably tenth century.

Ground: mulham.⁴¹

Embroidery: in pink, blue, and cream silk, in split-stitch; and gold (membrane wound on cream silk cord) couched with cream silk.

Large roundels (.25 in diameter), edged with a band (.04 wide); small roundels (.08 in diameter), edged with a band (.01 to .02 wide).

.69 x .5.

Published:

G. Wiet, *Tissus Brodés Mesopotamiens*, *Ars Islamica*, vol. 4 (1937), pp. 54-64.

31.443, 31.444, and 31.445. FIGURE 12.

EMBROIDERY, MESOPOTAMIAN (BAGHDAD).

Probably tenth century.

Ground: mulham.⁴¹

Embroidery: in light-green, cream, light-blue, and brown silk, in split-stitch; and gold (membrane wound on cream silk cord) couched with cream silk.

.105 x .105; .145 x .09; .09 x .11.

⁴¹ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

⁴² A piece of the same group is a tapestry band on a red silk ground, in the National Museum, Stockholm (no. N. M. 245/1932). Cf. Lamm, *Nationalmusei Arsbok* (1934, New Series 4), pp. 27, 28, and 30, fig. 24. Another piece is in the Metropolitan Museum (no. 31.106.66): a tapestry band on a ground of green linen (?) (possibly silk?). Cf. Dimand, *op. cit.*, p. 94, fig. 2.

SECTION THREE. EGYPT.

Transitional Period.

In Egypt, tapestry-weaving had existed from very early times. It was used as early as the Eighteenth Dynasty for garments, hangings, and rugs. From the few examples which are preserved to us today,¹ such as the one shown in figure 94, we may see the charm of the pattern and the adroitness of the technique. The Pharaonic artists transmitted their skill to their descendants in the Graeco-Roman and Coptic periods, who established a flourishing international trade in the first six centuries of the Christian era; so that the craft continued in an unbroken line into the period of Islam.

When the Arabs conquered Egypt in A. D. 641, they did little to disturb the very profitable industry which they had inherited. The Coptic weavers continued under Arab control, and indeed not until A. D. 705 was the Arabic language required even in government offices. This very superficial regulation, when it occurred, affected only a small percentage of the people; and it was only after Bedouin tribes had casually migrated into the country and gradually become assimilated into the peasant population that Arab culture really supplanted that of the Copts. At first the cultural change affected only language and custom; the art felt little influence, as the nomad Arabs had very little contribution to make to its development.

¹ Egyptian Museum, Cairo, no. 46526: part of a garment with a design of tapestry-woven pink and blue lotus flowers; cartouche of Amenhotep II. Cf. Carter and Newberry, *Tomb of Thoutmosis IV* (Cairo, Cat. Gén., vol. 15), plate 1. Also *The Art of Egypt*, plate facing p. 168.

Plate 94: Egyptian Museum, Cairo, no. 46527: part of a garment with tapestry-woven hieroglyphs in blue, dark-red, and neutral yellow; the duck at the top very much suggests Coptic work of the finest type. Cf. Carter and Newberry, *op. cit.*, plate 28.

Turin Museum: tapestry-woven (and painted?) cloths. Cf. Schiaparelli, *Tomba Intatta dell' Architetto Cha*, figs. 114-116.

Egyptian Museum, Cairo, no. 24987: tapestry-woven and painted cloth. Cf. Daressy, *Fouilles de la Vallée des Rois* (Cairo, Cat. Gén., vol. 3), plate 57.

Egyptian Museum, Cairo, no. 3379 (Carter's no. 21V): parts of a garment with tapestry-woven red and green quatrefoils; from the tomb of Tutankhamun.

Even in the cities which were centers of weaving the change was not quickly felt. With Coptic workmen in the Arab factories, it is natural that the technique of tapestry should continue very much as before the conquest. It was some time before the designs changed radically from the pictorial representations of Hellenistic influence to the more abstract and geometric ornament required by the religious precepts of Islam. Therefore the most immediate and important change which occurred with the Islamic conquest was the difference of material used.

Coptic garments were generally unshaped robes of linen, with narrow vertical tapestry-woven bands ornamenting either side of the front and back, and tapestry medallions on the shoulders, front and back, and sleeves of the garment.² The tapestry was either sewed to the garment or woven into it. Since the decoration was of wool and linen, the effect was necessarily rather coarse, and with such a medium, no great subtlety of design was possible. Silk is rarely found in pre-Islamic Egyptian textiles,³ since it had been produced for only a century before the conquest.⁴

The colors were achieved from several bases. The most common pigment for red dye was garance, and others were kermes and cochineal; blues were obtained from indigo, and yellows from *grains de Perse* (rhamnus).⁵ The extraordinary fact discovered by M. Pfister⁶ is that simultaneously with the coming of the Arabs to Egypt, kermes and cochineal ceased almost completely to be used as a base for red dye and were supplanted by lac-dye which came exclusively from India. Kermes had been obtained from Asia Minor, and cochineal from the borders of the Black Sea; so that the only possible explanation is that, with the Arab invasion, commerce with these countries was interrupted, and a new trade opened up to India through the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. Another curious fact is that garance, indigenous to Egypt, con-

² Cf. A. F. Kendrick, *Catalogue of Textiles from Burying Grounds in Egypt*, Victoria and Albert Museum, vols. 1 to 3.

³ An important exception is a silk tapestry-woven horseman medallion in the Boston collection, no. 35.87. A similar piece from the Victoria and Albert Museum is illustrated in Peirce and Tyler, *L'Art Byzantin*, vol. 2, plate 44b.

⁴ Cf. R. Guest, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1906), p. 389.

⁵ Pfister, *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, vol. 5 (1928), pp. 27-29.

⁶ Pfister, *op. cit.*, vol. 10 (1936), pp. 1-16.

tinued to be used, but in a much smaller proportion of pieces than before the conquest. Two reasons suggest themselves, both probably partly true: one reason must certainly be found in the superiority of the lac-dye red, which is both stronger and clearer than the reds used previously. Another important suggestion, offered by M. Pfister, is that in the Coptic period Egypt had found her own supply of garance insufficient to her needs and had imported more from the countries of the eastern Mediterranean. This supply must have been cut off at the time of the conquest.

The next change to take place, still in the eighth century, before the design had modified appreciably, was caused by the altered form of the Arab garment.⁷ In A. D. 689 and again under the 'Abbasid caliph el Mutawakkil (A. D. 847-861) orders were given restricting the apparel of Christians; so that Christian motifs soon disappeared. The Arab dress was similar to the Coptic robe, except that now the pattern generally ran horizontally in a narrow band below the neck and along the top of the sleeves.⁸

With these two indications (the material of the dye and the direction of design) we are able to attribute to Islam two pieces which are still Coptic in general feeling (figures 13 and 14). Both have linen warps and a tapestry-woven pattern of wool and linen.

That the change from wool to silk came early in Islam, before a definite Islamic style had completely developed, is shown by two bands of silk tapestry (figures 15 and 16). These are truly transitional pieces, with elements of both cultures plainly merged. The presence of the elephants in figure 15 might suggest at first that the piece was made in some place other than Egypt, since these animals are not native to it. However, we must remember that the elephant was a favorite Islamic motif, which is found in other media besides textiles.⁹ The year of Muhammad's birth was known

⁷ Cf. Pfister, *op. cit.*, p. 10; and Wiet, "Kibt," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

⁸ See figs. 98-100; also Reath and Sachs, *Persian Textiles*, plate 51.

⁹ Cf. Baghat and Massoul, *La Céramique Musulmane de l'Égypte* (Cairo, 1930), plate 58 (15): a water-filter with the design of a grotesque elephant; Egypt, Fatimid.

Cf. Max Herz-Pacha, *Orientalisches Archiv*, vol. 3 (1912-1913), plate 29, fig. 18: a panel of wood-carving; Egypt, eleventh century.

Cf. E. Blochet, *Musulman Painting*, plate 21: a miniature painting showing an elephant; Iraq, ca. A. D. 1230.

Cf. Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, plate 12: a painting from Makamat Hariri; fourteenth century.

as "The Year of the Elephant,"¹⁰ and a *surah* (chapter) of the Qur'an is entitled, "The Chapter of the Elephant."¹¹ Looking further at the design of figure 15 with this in mind, we conclude that a designer would be likely to produce a drawing of exactly this sort of elephant when he had never seen one.

A question which will confront us again as we examine the robust humor of the animals in the Fayoum group is whether this caricature was intentional, or whether it came only from naïveté and very poor drawing. It is certain, at least, that the pieces express, in a few lines, both vigor and action, qualities which could not be entirely accidental.

37.447. FIGURE 13.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Eighth century.

Warps: undyed linen.¹²

Tapestry medallion: of red, dark-green, blue-green, yellow-green, yellow, and dark-blue wool¹² and undyed linen. Floral motif in green pointed-oval on square pink field.

.13 x .08.

37.448. FIGURE 14.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Eighth to ninth century.

Ground: fine undyed linen cloth, mostly perished.

Tapestry band: of dark-blue, red, yellow, and green wool and undyed linen. Yellow vine, red fruit, and linen rabbit and duck; on blue field. Crenelated border of red and linen.

.15 x .045.

A lustre plate of the Fatimid period in the collection of 'Ali Pacha Ibrahim, Cairo, also has the design of an elephant.

¹⁰ This was the year in which Abrahah, viceroy of the Christian king of Abyssinia, marched against Mecca with a large army, and accompanied by an elephant, an animal which the Arabians of the Hedjaz had never seen before. It was the intention of Abrahah to destroy the Ka'bah (the shrine of Mecca), but his entire army was suddenly wiped out by small-pox (the "small pebbles" of the Qur'an), and the city was saved. Cf. Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹¹ Qur'an, chapter 105, The Chapter of the Elephant: "Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the masters of the elephant? Did he not make their treacherous design an occasion of drawing them into error; and send against them flocks of birds, which cast upon them pebbles of baked clay; and render them like the leaves of corn eaten by cattle?"

¹² Analyzed by Mr. Young.

25.160. FIGURE 15.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Eighth to ninth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth; ¹³ plain selvage at right.

Tapestry band: of pale-yellow, red, blue, green, and brown silk and undyed linen.¹³ One blue and one yellow elephant and green fabulous beast; on red field. Striped border of red and linen.¹⁴
.195 x .17.

11.89. FIGURE 16.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Eighth to ninth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth; ¹³ tightly woven selvage (.005 wide) at right.

Tapestry band: of bright-yellow, green, blue, red, and black silk and undyed linen.¹³ Red, green, or blue medallions (.04 wide), containing yellow, red, or linen animal; on yellow field. Blue striped border, and undulating yellow border.
.37 x .115.

The Fayoum.

The pieces from the Fayoum, province of Middle Egypt, have many characteristics in common with the fragments which we have just described. They resemble even more closely a group of late Coptic textiles of which there are examples in the Boston Museum.¹⁵ This analogous Coptic group is on a loose cloth ground of colored wool, generally blue, sometimes embellished with a tapestry band, and further decorated with an embroidered Coptic inscription. In the Victoria and Albert Museum is an intermediate piece of this type,¹⁶ with what appears to be a simulated Arabic inscription running below. The next step is to be found in figure 18, which has a tapestry band and embroidered inscriptions in both Arabic and Coptic; both inscriptions are pious formulae. The last step in the transition is seen in figure 19, which

¹³ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

¹⁴ Another fragment of the same piece is illustrated in Isabella Errera, *Collection d'Anciennes Etoffes Egyptiennes* (1916), p. 123, no. 273.

¹⁵ Nos. 96.136 (on blue wool cloth ground) and 03.1879a-d (on undyed wool cloth ground). Also cf. Kendrick, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, plate 11, no. 331.

¹⁶ Cf. Kendrick, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, plate 7, no. 627.

contains an ornamental band and a Kufic inscription, both tapestry-woven.

In other collections there are a sufficient number of these pieces to assure us that they belong to a definite group. All have a loose cloth ground of colored wool, decorated with a line of Kufic writing and a tapestry band. The decoration of the band is either geometric, as in figures 18 and 19, or else it consists of a row of grotesque animals, as in several pieces in the Arab Museum, Cairo.¹⁷ These animals are clear-cut in outline and economical in detail, and are so different from the confused and debased Hellenistic designs at the end of the Coptic period that we believe their extravagance and humor to be intentional. The calligraphy is also individual and fantastic. The letters are sturdy and compact, with broad triangular tops and hook-shaped barbs, and the shafts of the letters rise in steps, so that at first glance the line gives the impression of a complicated geometric border.

The inscriptions are, for the most part, merely pious phrases,¹⁸ sometimes written backwards,¹⁹ in mirror-writing. But two pieces in the Arab Museum, Cairo, have inscriptions which give us important clues as to their source. One tells that it was made in a village in the Fayoum;²⁰ and the other gives a date at the end of the tenth century.²¹

Figure 17 is undoubtedly earlier than the other pieces. It is a question whether it is actually a member of this group; technically it is slightly different, and its colored cloth ground is built of wool warps and linen wefts, instead of all wool as we should expect. But because of its general similarity, we believe that it may be an early version from the Fayoum.²²

¹⁷ Nos. 9061 (Gob. Exp. Cat. 62), cf. Wiet, *Syria*, vol. 16 (1935), plate 17a; 8101 (Gob. Exp. Cat. 63); 9052 (Gob. Exp. Cat. 64), Wiet, *op. cit.*, plate 17c; and 9050 (Gob. Exp. Cat. 65, plate 6). Also Pfister, *op. cit.*, plate 29 (C 16).

¹⁸ See fig. 18; also cf. Gob. Exp. Cat. nos. 64 and 65; and Lamm, *Le Monde Oriental*, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76, no. 58, plate 15.

¹⁹ Cf. Lamm, *op. cit.*, p. 76, no. 59, plate 15.

²⁰ No. 9061 (Gob. Exp. Cat. 62). Cf. Wiet, *op. cit.*, p. 286, plate 17a: "... and perfect grace to its owner. This is what was made in the private workshop of ... (?) in the district of the Fayoum."

²¹ A. H. 375 (A. D. 985/6) or A. H. 395 (A. D. 1004/5). Cf. Lamm, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

²² For further examples of this group: cf. Pfister, *op. cit.*, plates 29 and 30; Wiet, *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* (1935), p. 10 (fig.); Dimand, *Handbook*, p. 204, fig. 125.

37.449. FIGURE 17.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN (THE FAYOUM?).

Eighth to ninth century.

Ground: loose brown cloth, with linen²⁸ warps and wool²⁸ wefts; mostly perished.

Tapestry band: ostriches and quadrupeds of undyed wool, on trapezoids of blue-green, purple, red, blue, green, and yellow wool.²⁸ Serrated border (.01 wide) of red and undyed wool.

.27 x .09.

11.1398. FIGURE 18.

TAPESTRY AND EMBROIDERY, EGYPTIAN (THE FAYOUM).

Ninth to tenth century.

Ground: loose blue wool cloth.

Tapestry band: of yellow, blue, green, and red wool and undyed linen.

Polychrome geometric pattern with yellow borders. Embroidered (outline-stitch) inscriptions: of yellow, red, and green wool and undyed linen.

1. Coptic (.007 high).

2. Kufic (.015 high).

.28 x .145.

Inscriptions:

1.²⁴ ٢...٩ ٤٢٢٢ ٢٤ ٢٤...

2.²⁵ لا اله الا الله

Translation:

1. "... for joy that the ..."

2. "There is no god but Allah" (repeated).

37.444. FIGURE 19.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN (THE FAYOUM).

Ninth to tenth century.

Ground: loose brown wool cloth; edged with strips of undyed linen and brown wool fringe.

Tapestry band: of dark-red, green, yellow, and dark-blue silk and undyed linen; in geometric pattern. Kufic inscription (.01 high) of undyed linen.

.415 x .31 (without fringe).

²⁸ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

²⁴ Read by Prof. William H. Worrell, of the University of Michigan.

²⁵ Read by Ettinghausen.

Inscription : ²⁶

𐤀𐤋

Translation :

“ god ” (repeated).

Upper Egypt.

There is a small series of textiles made entirely, or almost entirely, of wool, both for decoration and for ground. All are undated,²⁷ and in want of definite evidence as to their provenance, we have attributed them to Upper Egypt, which was famous for its woolen stuffs. Assiut, Bahnasa, el Queis, and Taha all had workshops. Nasiri Khosrau (A. D. 1045-1052) praises the looms of Assiut, and says that they made a wool stuff for turbans which was unequalled anywhere in the world, and was exported as far as Persia; he adds that in Misr (Cairo) they did not weave woolens.²⁸ We find from Maqrizi in his history (A. D. 1417-1436) that at Bahnasa and el Queis they made stuffs of wool and garments of goat's hair; he adds that they were the most beautiful looms in the world.²⁹ Taha is mentioned by Mukaddasi (A. D. 985) as a village where woolen cloths of a very high quality were manufactured.³⁰

The designs of the pieces which we believe to come from these workshops are in a very pronounced Coptic tradition. All are woven with tapestry, with the exception of figure 24, which is of twill-tapestry.³¹ Figures 23 and 24 have Kufic inscriptions. It is interesting to note that in Islamic Egypt, wool rarely if ever

²⁶ Read by Miss Florence Day.

²⁷ Cf. Wiet, *La Revue de l'Art Ancien et Moderne*, vol. 68 (1935), p. 9: "Of all the fragments of wool brought before us, none to our knowledge carries a date."

²⁸ Cf. *Sefer Nameh* (trans. Schefer), p. 173.

²⁹ Cf. *Khitat* (trans. Bouriant), part 2, p. 599. A fragment bearing the place-name of Bahnasa is in the Arab Museum, Cairo (no. 13131).

³⁰ *Description of the Lands of Islam* (trans. Ranking and Azoo), p. 331.

³¹ Cf. Reath, *The Weaves of Hand-loom Fabrics*, pp. 9 and 11, fig. 3: *Twill*: series of regularly recurrent warp threads pass in echelon over and under the weft threads, one after another and two or more at a time, producing diagonal ribs or stepped patterns; in twill, adjoining warp threads always intersect adjoining weft threads.

Twill tapestry: a simple fabric of twill weave in which the weft threads form the pattern and do not run the full width of the piece. Each weft is woven back and forth around the warp threads only where each particular color is needed.

appears in pieces proven to come from the Delta; the traditional type is of silk on linen. In the pieces from the Fayoum, in Middle Egypt, wool, silk, and linen are all used. So in view of this evidence from contemporary historians, it is natural to assume that fabrics made entirely of wool must come from the looms of Upper Egypt.⁸²

37.445. FIGURE 20.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN (UPPER EGYPT).

Probably eighth century.

Ground: undyed wool cloth; narrow hem at top.

Tapestry band: of red, blue-green, yellow, blue, and brown wool and undyed linen.⁸³ Birds in red roundels (.03 high); yellow floral motifs on blue field; within circlets of black and white "pearl" motif.⁸⁴ Polychrome barber-pole border.

.39 x .245.

01.5909. FIGURE 21.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN (UPPER EGYPT).

Eighth to ninth century.

Ground: ribbed undyed wool cloth.

Tapestry band: of red, blue, and light-green wool.

.432 x .23.

32.114. FIGURE 22.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN (UPPER EGYPT).

Ninth to tenth century.

Warps: neutral green wool.

Tapestry band: of blue, green, red, pink, yellow, and undyed wool; design of lotus flower.⁸⁵

.15 x .085.

⁸² Also cf. Lamm, *Le Monde Oriental*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

⁸³ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

⁸⁴ The "pearl" motif appears also in figs. 21, 57, and 58.

⁸⁵ Similar motifs executed on manuscripts are illustrated in F. R. Martin, *The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India, and Turkey* (London, 1912), vol. 2, plate 236.

96.278. FIGURE 23.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN (UPPER EGYPT).

Ninth to tenth century.

Warps: red wool.

Tapestry band: of pink, red, blue, yellow, green, and undyed wool.

Kufic inscription (.015 high) of undyed wool filled in with red.
.19 x .11.

Inscription: ⁸⁶

[اذا] بحسب انا خلقناكم عبنا

Translation:

"Did ye then think that we had created you in jest . . ." Qur'an,
chapter 23, verse 117.

30.687. FIGURE 24.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN (UPPER EGYPT).

Ninth to tenth century.

Warps: undyed wool.

Twill-tapestry: of red, blue, blue-green, and undyed wool. Three rounds, one above the other; on red field. Undeciphered Kufic inscription (.055 high) of undyed wool.

.46 x .14.

'Abbasid Period.

Egypt was more or less a province of the 'Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad from its conquest in A. D. 641 until A. D. 969 when it was supplanted by the rival caliphate of the Fatimids, who founded Cairo as their capital. We have shown that in the first years after the conquest the Coptic influence was still strong in Egypt. And in A. D. 868 the semi-independent governorship of the Tulunids was established, which dimmed the importance of Baghdad, and in fact developed a characteristic style of its own.⁸⁷ So that it was not until A. D. 905, the end of the Tulunid period, that the 'Abbasids regained full sway in Egypt, and the tiraz began consistently to follow the form that we have already seen used in tenth century Mesopotamia.

Either tapestry or split-stitch embroidery was employed in these

⁸⁶ Read by Miss Day.

⁸⁷ Cf. Zaky Hassan, *Les Tulunides*; Gob. Exp. Cat., nos. 55-59, plates 1 and 5; and Wiet, *Revue de l'Art Ancien et Moderne* (1935), p. 7 (fig.).

tiraz. The first of our inscriptions bear the name of el Muttaqi (A. D. 940-944);³⁸ others have the name of el Muti', the last 'Abbasid caliph of Baghdad to reign over Egypt.³⁹ Three pieces of tapestry without a dating inscription⁴⁰ have been included in this series, since their type of decoration seems to place them before the Fatimid period.

Figure 25 is interesting since it provides a definite date. Both figures 25 and 28 name the wazir and were made in a royal workshop. Shata, the city mentioned in figure 28, was in the Delta between Tinnis and Damietta.⁴¹ Pieces of this type appear all to have been made either at Fustat (called Misr)⁴² or in a number of cities and villages in the Delta, all enumerated by Mr. Rhuvon Guest⁴³ as centers of weaving: Alexandria,⁴⁴ Dabik,⁴⁵ Damietta,⁴⁶ el Farama,⁴⁷ Nasha⁴⁸ (apparently thus and not Bansha), Shata,⁴⁹ Tinnis,⁵⁰ Touna,⁵¹ and el Queis⁵² (another village beside the one in Upper Egypt).

³⁸ See figs. 25 and 26.

³⁹ See figs. 28-32.

⁴⁰ See figs. 35-38.

⁴¹ Cf. Mukaddasi (trans. Ranking and Azoo), p. 330; Maqrizi (trans. Bouriant), part 2, p. 666.

⁴² Cf. Nasiri Khosrau, *op. cit.*, pp. 151, 173. However, the designation "Misr" may mean either Fustat (later, Cairo) or Egypt in general. M. Wiet (*L'Exposition Persane de 1931*, p. 6) is inclined to believe that Misr merely means Egypt in textile inscriptions, since so many more tiraz are preserved to us bearing the name of Misr than of other textile centers.

⁴³ Cf. Guest, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1930), pp. 763-764; Grohmann, "Tiraz," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, fasc. M, pp. 785-793; Wiet, *Syria*, vol. 16 (1935), pp. 282-283.

⁴⁴ Cf. Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 465: Alexandria made embroideries and a linen tissue called *el sharb*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 667: Dabik apparently began weaving under the Fatimid caliph el 'Aziz in A. D. 975 and ended with his death in A. D. 996. They made there stuffs brocaded with gold, turbans of colored linen, and *dabiqi* with designs of gold; also linen turbans with threads of gold.

⁴⁶ Cf. Mukaddasi, *op. cit.*, p. 330; Nasiri Khosrau, *op. cit.*, p. 110: white *quaçab* (a linen of extreme fineness) was made here by Coptic workmen.

⁴⁷ Cf. Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, p. 520. (This does not appear to have been a very important weaving-center.)

⁴⁸ Cf. Grohmann, *op. cit.*, p. 789.

⁴⁹ Cf. Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, p. 666: at Shata they make the veil for the Ka'bah.

⁵⁰ Cf. Mukaddasi, *op. cit.*, p. 330; Nasiri Khosrau, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-114: nowhere else do they make as beautiful *quaçab* of color.

⁵¹ Cf. Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, p. 519.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 520.

31.59. FIGURE 25.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, Caliph el Muttaqi, A. D. 941.

Ground: undyed linen cloth.

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.015 high) ; of green silk.

.83 x .48.

Inscription: ⁵⁸

[بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم بركة من الله وسعادة لعبد الله ابي اسحاق
الامام المتقى بالله امير المؤمنين اسعده الله امر الوسر (sic) ابو]
عبد الله سنة ثلاثين وثلاثمئة

Translation:

“(In the name of) God the compassionate the Merciful. Blessing from God, and good fortune of the Servant of God, Abu Ishak, the Imam, el Muttaqi billah, Commander of the Faithful. May God prosper him. The wazir A(bu) Abdullah ordered (this) ⁵⁸ in the year 330 (A. D. 941).”

32.29. FIGURE 26.

EMBROIDERY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, Caliph el Muttaqi (A. D. 940-944).

Ground: glazed undyed linen cloth.⁵⁵

Embroidered (split-stitch) Kufic inscription (.013 high) ; of red silk.

.265 x 14.

Inscription: ⁵⁶

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم بركة من الله لعبد الله ابراهيم الامام
[المتقى بالله ابو] امير المؤمنين

Translation:

“In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful. Blessing from God to the Servant of God, Ibrahim, the Imam, (el Muttaqi billah), Commander of the Faithful.”

⁵⁵ Read by Rhuvon Guest.

ا is abbreviation for ابو

الوسر is written wrongly الوزير

⁵⁶ The form امر (Such a one) ordered (this to be made)” appears also on glass weights of the period. Cf. S. Lane-Poole, *Catalogue of Arabic Glass Weights in the British Museum* (London, 1891), p. xix.

⁵⁷ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

⁵⁸ Read by Dr. Ettinghausen.

31.247. FIGURE 27.

EMBROIDERY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, first half of tenth century.

Ground: glazed undyed linen cloth.⁵⁷

Embroidered (split-stitch) Kufic inscription (.01 high) ; of red silk.
.19 x .135.

Inscription : ⁵⁸

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم صلى الله على محمد

Translation :

" In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful. The benediction of God be upon Muhammad. . . ."

34.118. FIGURE 28.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN (SHATA).

'Abbasid Period, Caliph el Muti' (A. D. 962).

Ground: undyed linen cloth. At top, narrow stripe of undyed silk, and fringe (.03 wide).

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.012 high) ; of red silk.
.48 x .235 (without fringe).

Inscription :

... سعادة لعبدالله الفضل الامام المطيع لله امير المؤمنين اطال الله
بقاه امر الوزير بعمله في طراز الخاصة بشطا على يدى فائز مولى امير
المومنين اطال الله بقاء سنة اخصمين وثلاثمئة

Translation :

" . . . good fortune to the Servant of God, el Fadl, the Imam, el Muti'lillah, Commander of the Faithful, may God prolong his life. The wazir ordered (this) to be made in the royal workshop of Shata by the hands of Fa'iz, the freedman of the Commander of the Faithful. May God prolong his life. The year 350 (A. D. 962)."

31.58. FIGURE 29.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, Caliph el Muti' (946-969 A. D.).

Ground: undyed linen cloth. At top, two narrow stripes of green and yellow silk.

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.065 high) ; of brown silk.
.51 x .33.

⁵⁷ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

⁵⁸ Read by M. Wiet.

Inscription: ⁵⁹

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم المطيع لله امير الموم [نين]
.....

Translation:

"In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful. El Muti' lillah, Commander of the Faithful. . . ."

31.60. FIGURE 30.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, Caliph el Muti'.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. At top, strip of unwoven warps (.025 wide).

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.065 high); of dark-green silk outlined with yellow silk.

1.02 x .49.

Inscription: ⁵⁹

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الفضل الامام المطيع لله امير المومنين ايده الله

Translation:

"In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful. El Fadl, the Imam, el Muti' lillah, Commander of the Faithful. May God strengthen him."

34.114. FIGURE 31.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, Caliph el Muti'.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. At top, narrow green silk stripe, and two strips of unwoven warps.

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.115 high); of red silk.

.96 x .62.

Inscription: ⁵⁹

[بسم] الله الرحمن الرحيم الفضل المطيع لله امير المومنين اطال الله
بقاه سنة ...

Translation:

"(In the name of) God the Compassionate the Merciful. El Fadl, el Muti' lillah, Commander of the Faithful. May God prolong his life. The year. . . ."

⁵⁹ Read by Mr. Guest.

34.117. FIGURE 32.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, Caliph el Muti'.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. At top, narrow brown silk stripe.

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.115 high); of brown silk.

.59 x 49.

Inscription: ⁶⁰

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم المطيع لله ا...

Translation:

"(In the name of God) the Compassionate the Merciful. El Muti' lillah. . ."

31.57. FIGURE 33.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, probably Caliph el Muti'.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. At top, two narrow stripes of blue and yellow silk and two strips of unwoven warps.

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.09 high); of brown silk. Two parts of inscription, mounted together.

.52 x .61.

Inscription: ⁶¹

a. ... محمد ذ[ا] تم النب[ي] ن بركة ...

b. ... امير الم[و]منين ايده الله ...

Translation:

a. "... Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets. Blessing. . ."

b. "... (Commander) of the Faithful. May God strengthen him. . ."

31.56. FIGURE 34.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, probably Caliph el Muti'.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. At top, two narrow strips of unwoven warps.

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.09 high) of brown silk.

.41 x .30.

Inscription:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم[عن] ...

Translation:

"In the name of God the Compassionate. . ."

⁶⁰ Read by Mr. Guest.

⁶¹ Read by Dr. Ettinghausen and M. Wiet.

15.377. FIGURE 35.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, middle of tenth century.⁸²

Warps: undyed linen.

Tapestry band: of yellow, black, blue-green, and green silk and undyed linen,⁸³ on pink silk field.

.215 x .08.

15.381. FIGURE 36.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, middle of tenth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. Tightly-woven selvage (.005 wide) at right. Fringe (.05 wide) at top.

Silk tapestry band (.025 wide): of green, yellow-green, blue, black, and yellow on undyed field.

.26 x .155.

15.463. FIGURE 37.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, middle of tenth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth.⁸⁴ mostly perished.

Silk tapestry band (.05 wide): of blue, green, brown, and yellow on undyed field. Crenelated borders (.005 wide) of brown or blue.

.475 x .05.

15.767. FIGURE 38.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

'Abbasid Period, second half of tenth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. Plain selvage at right.

Silk tapestry band: of light-green, white, cream, and yellow. Kufic inscription (.02 high) on cream field.

.68 x .155.

⁸² Dr. Lamm has noted the similarity of this piece to a ninth century textile from Merv in the Arab Museum, Cairo, no. 12298 (Gob. Exp. Cat. 82), published by Hawary, *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte*, vol. 16 (1933-1934), pp. 62, 69, and 70, plate 1. The design and color of the two pieces are strikingly similar. But since the Cairo piece is apparently on a ground of mulham and the Boston piece has been found on analysis to have linen warps, we assume that the latter textile is a later Egyptian version of the Persian design. The curious crumbled appearance of the Boston piece, also noticeable in the Cairo piece, suggests that the linen warps may have contained fibres of silk which have since perished, thus weakening the fabric. Another piece in the Boston collection with this same crumbled appearance is figure 37. This also has linen warps, and its design, with animals in roundels and triangular forms in the interstices, is similar to such pieces as figure 36, typical of the 'Abbasid period in the middle of the tenth century.

⁸³ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

Inscription : ⁶⁴

الحمد لله والملك لله

Translation :

" Praise be to god, and the kingdom to god. . . ." (repeated in reverse)

Published :

Kühnel, *Islamische Stoffe*, p. 19u.

Fatimid Period.

We have seen that at the end of the 'Abbasid period a bold style of calligraphy had developed, which was notable both for its simplicity and its dignity. This type of tiraz continued into the Fatimid period ⁶⁵ through the time of el 'Aziz, ⁶⁶ (A. D. 975-996).

During the reign of el Hakim (A. D. 996-1020), his successor, a new and more subtle type of decoration became fashionable. The design was now in miniature, a mosaic of small and elegant birds and palmettes, well-drawn and clearly defined, with a simple inscription woven with the same exquisite workmanship. ⁶⁷

The workshops under el Zahir and el Mustansir evolved the graceful form of calligraphy which we associate with the latter caliph : the tall curve of the final letter, the symmetry and clearness of the small letters, and the lavish interlacing of vine and palmette. ⁶⁸ This is the finest period of decoration in Fatimid Egypt.

In the latter part of the eleventh century this incidental decoration to the inscription became more and more elaborate and important, so that tall letters were frequently cut off when they disturbed the symmetry of the pattern. ⁶⁹ This made the words very difficult to decipher and led naturally to the next step, of using imitation Kufic inscriptions as the framework for a fine network of design. ⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Read by Dr. Lamm and Miss Day.

⁶⁵ The Fatimid caliphs of Cairo (A. D. 969-1171) claimed to be descended from Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad. Their fourth caliph, Mu'izz li din Allah, stormed Egypt from the west. Mecca fell the same year, Damascus in A. D. 988, and there was even an ephemeral submission of Baghdad in A. D. 1058. At its zenith the Fatimid empire held full sway from Syria to Northern Africa.

⁶⁶ See fig. 39.

⁶⁷ See figs. 43-47.

⁶⁸ See figs. 48, 50-55.

⁶⁹ See figs 63 and 64. Cf. also Florence Day, *Ars Islamica*, vol. 4 (1937), p. 446, no. 29, fig. 29.

⁷⁰ See figs. 65-69, etc.

In the twelfth century these same mannerisms continued in a more complex form.⁷¹ Through the century they became more and more stylized; debased Naskhi inscriptions replaced the formal Kufic; and by the end of the Fatimid period the motifs had lost their original significance in a mass of conventional detail.⁷²

32.32. FIGURE 39.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, Caliph el 'Aziz (A. D. 975-996).

Ground: undyed linen cloth. At top, narrow blue silk stripe.

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.065 high) in brown silk.
.55 x .33.

Inscription: ⁷³

بسم [الله] الرحمن الرحيم ابو المنصور العزيز بالله

Translation:

"In the name (of God) the Compassionate the Merciful. Abu Mansur, el 'Aziz billah."

34.119. FIGURE 40.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, Caliph el Hakim (A. D. 996-1020).

Ground: undyed linen cloth.

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.048 high).
.44 x 27.

Inscription: ⁷⁴

... الحاکم بالله (sic) لا إله الا الله (sic) لا إله الا الله (sic) [ابن] العزيز بالله

Translation:

"... el Hakim billah. (sic) There is no god but Allah. (Son of) el 'Aziz billah."

⁷¹ See figs. 77-82.

⁷² See figs. 83-87. For a complete survey of Fatimid art cf. Zaky Hassan, *The Artistic Treasures of the Fatimids* (Cairo, 1937, text in Arabic).

⁷³ Read by Mr. Guest.

⁷⁴ Read by Miss Day. Another piece with this type of calligraphy is in the National Museum, Stockholm, no. 233/1932 (cf. Lamm, *Nationalmuseumens Arsbok* (1934), p. 15, fig. 7); a second is in the Arab Museum, Cairo (cf. Wiet, *Revue de l'Art Ancien et Moderne* (1935), p. 63 (fig.)); and a third is in the University of Michigan, no. 22526 (cf. Day, *Ars Islamica*, vol. 4 (1937), p. 444, no. 26, fig. 26).

34.116. FIGURE 41.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, Caliph el Hakim.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. Plain selvage at left. Strip of unwoven warps (.05 wide) at top.

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.04 high) of brown silk; on field of undyed linen.

.735 x .45.

Inscription: ⁷⁸

... المنصور [و] ر الحاكم بامر الله لا اله الا الله الخير معين بمن بالله
والتوفيق بالله والاقبال من الله

Translation:

"... el Mansur, el Hakim bi amri 'llah. There is no god but Allah.
The good is an aid. Fortune is in God. And success is in God.
And prosperity comes from God."

32.31. FIGURE 42.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, Caliph el Hakim.

Ground: undyed linen cloth.

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscription (.025 high) of brown silk; on field of undyed linen.

.47 x .4.

Inscription: ⁷⁹

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم المنصور الحاكم بامر الله امير المؤمنين بين
(sic) العزيز بالله طارله الله ...

Translation:

"In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful. El Mansur, el Hakim bi amri 'llah, Commander of the Faithful, son of el 'Aziz billah. May God lengthen his days. . . ."

Published:

Répertoire, vol. 6, no. 2274.

37.450 a AND b. FIGURE 43.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, Caliph el Hakim.

Ground: fine undyed linen cloth. Plain selvage at left and right. Loom-width: (a) .25; (b) .27. Fine fringe (.035 wide) at top.

⁷⁸ Read by Miss Day.

⁷⁹ Read by Mr. Guest and Miss Day.

Tapestry-woven Kufic inscriptions (.005 to .01 high) in undyed linen on brown silk band. Vine borders (.005 to .008 wide) of red and yellow silk.

(a) .25 x .19 (without fringe); (b) .28 x .19.

Inscriptions:

a. line 1: الملك لله

line 2: بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لا اله الا الله نصر من الله لعبد الله ووليه المنصور ابي على الامام الحاكم بامر الله

b. بسم [الله] العلي العظيم الرحمن الرحيم لا اله الا الله نصر من الله لعبد الله ووليه المنصور ابي على الامام الحاكم بامر الله

Translation:

a. line 1: "The kingdom to god" (repeated).

line 2: "In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful. There is no god but Allah. Victory from God to the Servant of God and his friend, el Mansur Abu 'Ali, the Imam, el Hakim bi amri 'llah."

b. "In the name (of God) the Forgiving the Exalted" the Compassionate the Merciful. There is no god but Allah. Victory from God to the Servant of God and his friend, el Mansur Abu 'Ali, the Imam, el Hakim bi amri 'llah."

37.443. FIGURE 44.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, probably Caliph el Hakim.

Ground: fine undyed linen cloth. Plain selvage at left. At top, strip of unweaved warps (.025 wide) and narrow green silk stripes.

Tapestry bands: of blue silk and undyed linen. Two lines (adorned) of Kufic writing (.005 high each).

.23 x .22.

Inscriptions: ⁷⁸

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له محمد رسول الله ص[لى الله عليه وسلم] ...
2. ... [صلوات] الله عليهما وعلى ابائهما الطاهرين الائمة ...

Translation:

1. "In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful. There is no god but Allah. He has no companion; Muhammad is the prophet of God. (The benediction of God). . . ."
2. " . . . (The benediction) of God be upon them both and upon their pure fathers, the Imams. . . ."

⁷⁸ From the Qur'an, chapter 42, verse 2.

⁷⁹ Read by Miss Day.

15.390. FIGURE 45.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, probably Caliph el Hakim.

Warps: undyed linen.

Tapestry band: of green, red, black, and cream silk. Multicolored affronted birds. Kufic inscription (.007 high) in black on cream; written backwards.

.23 x .065.

Inscription: ⁷⁹

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ... لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له ...

Translation:

"In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful. . . . There is no god but Allah, and he has no companion. . . ."

30.690. FIGURE 46.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, probably Caliph el Hakim.

Ground: fine light-blue linen cloth.

Silk tapestry band: of yellow, green, and black. Kufic inscription (.023 high) of yellow on blue. Affronted birds outlined in black, on yellow; above and below, leafy vine (.007 high) in yellow on green.

.135 x 115.

Inscription: ⁸⁰

الله

Translation:

"The kingdom of God" (repeated).

96.352. FIGURE 47.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, late tenth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. Plain selvage at right. At bottom, fringe (.02 wide) and yellow silk stripe (.015 wide).

Tapestry bands: addorsed birds in blue, yellow, and red silk; two lines (addorsed) of Kufic writing (.01 high each) of red silk on undyed linen.

.54 x .22 (without fringe).

⁷⁹ Read by Miss Day.

⁸⁰ Read by Dr. Ettinghausen. Miss Day has suggested the alternative reading: الله الملك "God is the king."

Inscription: ⁸⁰

الملك الله

Translation:

“ The kingdom of God ” (repeated).

32.28. FIGURE 48.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, Caliph el Zahir (A. D. 1031).

Ground: fine undyed linen cloth.

Tapestry bands: of yellow, green, brown, and dark-blue silk. 1. Two lines of Kufic (.015 high) in yellow on blue. 2. Two lines of Kufic (.005 high).

.48 x .255.

Inscription: ⁸¹

1. (a) [بسم] الله الرحمن الرحيم لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له محمد
[رسول الله] على ولي الله ص [لمى] ...
(b) ... ع الله له وايدى وعضه فى طراز العامة ... سنة اثنين عشرين
واربع مئة نصر من الله وف [تح] ...
2. الملك لله

Translation:

1. (a) “(In the name) of God the Compassionate the Merciful. There is no god but Allah. He has no companion; Muhammad (is the prophet of God), ‘Ali is the vicar of God. Prayer. . . .”
(b) “ . . . May God . . . him and strengthen him and help him. In the public tiraz . . .⁸² in the year 422 (A. D. 1031). Victory from God and help. . . .”
2. “ The kingdom to god ” (repeated).

⁸¹ Read by Dr. Ettinghausen and Miss Day.

⁸² This is probably the name of an unknown center of weaving. Dr. Lamm has suggested the ingenious possibility that the undeciphered word may be, not a place-name, but part of such a phrase as: **فى طراز العامة الشرقى** “in the public workshop of the nobles”; similarly “the workshop of the king” appears on two tiraz: a Yemenite textile in the Benaki Museum, Athens, and a piece in the Arab Museum, Cairo, no. 12144 (Gob. Exp. Cat. 71). However, as Miss Day has pointed out, a “workshop of the nobles” would be a private and not a public workshop. Miss Day suggests as a possibility: **فى طراز العامة الشرقى** “in the public eastern workshop.”

31.446. FIGURE 49.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, first half of eleventh century.

Ground: fine undyed linen cloth.⁸³ Plain selvage at left.

Tapestry band: of yellow and dark-blue silk, and gold (membrane wound on brownish silk). Two Kufic inscriptions (.015 high) of blue on gold.

.21 x .14.

Inscriptions: ⁸⁴

1. ... [صلا]ة ترضيهم الى يوم الدين مما ام[ر ب:] حملة [لا] اله الا اله
 (sic) الخير مقبل [سرور] بالله و[الاقبال] ...
2. ... [الم]لك الحق المتب[ن] الحمد [لله] ...

Translation:

1. "... prayer, which will satisfy them until the day of judgment. This is what was ordered to be made. There is no god but god (sic). Good will come. (Joy) is from God, and (prosperity). . . ."
2. "... God is the king, the evident truth. Praise be to god, lord of creatures. . . ."

15.1304. FIGURE 50.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, Caliph el Mustansir (A. D. 1036-1094).

Warps: undyed linen.

Tapestry band: of blue, red, brown, and white silk. Kufic inscription (.02 high) of white decorated with red and white scrolls; on blue field.

.21 x .04.

Inscription: ⁸⁵

1. ... الرحمن لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك [له] ...
2. ... [المستند]صر بالله امير المؤمنين صلى الله عل[يه] ...

Translation:

1. "(In the name of God the Compassionate) the Merciful. There is no god but Allah alone. There is no equal (to him). . . ."
2. "... (Mustan) sir billah, Commander of the Faithful. The benediction of God be upon (him). . . ."

⁸³ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

⁸⁴ Read by Miss Day.

⁸⁵ Read by Dr. Kühnel.

Published :

Kühnel, *Islamische Stoffe*, p. 23.

Kühnel, *Archiv für Orientforschung* (Festschrift für Max von Oppenheim), sup. vol. 1 (1933), p. 64, plate 2, fig 7.

Lamm, *Ars Islamica*, vol. 1 (1934), p. 98.

30.696. FIGURE 51.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, Caliph el Mustansir.

Ground: heavy ribbed undyed linen cloth, mostly cut away. Sewed to heavy grey-green linen cloth.

Tapestry band on paired warps: of red, black, blue, and yellow silk and undyed linen. Kufic inscription (.03 high) of linen, decorated with palmettes;⁸⁶ on yellow field. Scrolled border of linen and red and blue silk.⁸⁷

.21 x .12.

Inscription: ⁸⁸

... وبركة كاملة ونعمة شاملة وسعادة ...

Translation:

"... perfect blessing and universal prosperity and good fortune. . . ."

31.54. FIGURE 52.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, middle of eleventh century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth, mostly perished.

Tapestry band on triple warps: of brown, pink, green, and yellow silk and undyed linen. Kufic inscription (.1 high) of linen on pink field.

.185 x .16.

Inscription:

امير المؤمنين

Translation:

"Commander of the Faithful."

⁸⁶ Similar palmettes are in figure 52.

⁸⁷ Dr. Lamm has pointed out that the scrolled border, rare in textiles, closely resembles that on the panels of wood-carving from Kalawun palace of the Fatimids. (See fig. 95.) Variations of the same border are found: in a thirteenth century embroidered Italian dalmatic in Lübeck (cf. H. A. Gräbke, *Pantheon*, vol. 11, figs. 1-3); and in a Persian woven silk of the eleventh to twelfth century in the Boston collection (no. 31.402 a-c) (cf. Reath and Sachs, *Persian Silks*, plate 52).

⁸⁸ Read by Miss Day.

31.127. FIGURE 53.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, middle of eleventh century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth, mostly perished.

Tapestry band: of pink, yellow, blue-green, and black silk and undyed linen. Yellow birds in black ovals (.05 high), and white animals in pink ovals; scrolls in interstices on yellow or blue-green field. Kufic inscription (.03 high) of linen; lower line woven backwards; undeciphered. Part of 30.675.

.52 x .17.

30.675. FIGURE 54.

PART OF 31.127.

.245 x .185.

15.1303. FIGURE 55.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, middle of eleventh century.

Ground: blue-green linen cloth. Plain selvage, right and left. Pieced.

Tapestry band: of red, green, and yellow silk and undyed linen. Debased linen animal on red oval; ducks in small red ovals; on green field.

Kufic inscriptions (.022 high) in linen on red field; woven backwards; undeciphered.

.325 x .155.

30.699. FIGURE 56.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, middle of eleventh century.

Warps: undyed linen.

Tapestry band: of red, blue, yellow-green, and black silk and undyed linen. Animals and human figures in red ovals. Simulated Kufic inscriptions (.03 wide) of linen on red field.

.285 x .145.

30.694. FIGURE 57.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, middle of eleventh century.

Warps: light-blue linen.

Tapestry band: of pink, magenta, black, and yellow silk, and light-blue and undyed linen. Medallions and paired birds (.02 high),⁸⁹ en-

⁸⁹ The angular birds resemble those in figure 59.

closed by narrow circlets of the "pearl" motif,⁹⁰ are bordered above and below by lines of tall reversed scrolls (.045 high).⁹¹
.155 x .14.

30.702. FIGURE 58.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, middle of eleventh century.

Ground: light-blue linen cloth, mostly perished.

Tapestry oval: of magenta, black, and yellow silk and undyed linen.

Linen animals, outlined with black, on red field. Part of 30.694 (?).
.09 x .055.

30.692. FIGURE 59.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, middle of eleventh century.

Warps: blue linen.

Tapestry band: of blue and undyed linen. Kufic inscription (.02 high); undeciphered.
.115 x .085.

32.30. FIGURE 60.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, middle of eleventh century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth.

Tapestry band: of yellow wool and blue and undyed linen. Linen rabbits in blue ovals; on yellow field. Kufic inscription (.025 high) of linen.
.13 x .22.

Inscription: ⁹²

لله

Translation:

"god" (repeated).

⁹⁰ See fig. 20.

⁹¹ This reversed scroll motif appears in earlier versions: a Tulunid(?) textile of wool and silk, illustrated by Pfister in *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1936), plate 32, C31; and a ninth century tapestry shown by Kühnel in *Islamische Stoffe*, plate 2, no. 3108.

⁹² Read by Dr. Ettinghausen. Dr. Leo Mayer has suggested the alternative reading: لله the three letters which begin many chapters of the Qur'an.

30.695. FIGURE 61.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, second half of eleventh century.

Ground: grey-blue linen cloth.

Tapestry bands: of red, yellow, and brown silk and undyed linen. Kufic inscription (.04 high) of undyed linen on brown field.

.24 x .115.

Inscription: ⁹³

الله

Translation:

“god” (repeated and reversed).

30.689. FIGURE 62.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, second half of eleventh century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth.

Tapestry band: of black and pink silk and undyed linen. Linen bird on pink oval. Kufic inscription (.03 high) in black on linen field; undeciphered.

.165 x .095.

31.55. FIGURE 63.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, second half of eleventh century.

Ground: fine undyed linen cloth. Plain selvage at right. At top are fringe (.015 wide) and narrow stripes of red and yellow silk.

Silk tapestry band: yellow Kufic inscription (.02 high) ornamented with blue and white stems; on pink field.

.575 x .40 (without fringe).

Inscription: ⁹⁴

لم يلد ولم يولد

Translation:

“He begets not and he is not begotten” (repeated). Qur'an, chapter 112, verse 3.

30.679. FIGURE 64.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, second half of eleventh century.

Warps: cream and blue linen, in stripes.

⁹³ Read by Dr. Ettinghausen.

⁹⁴ Suggested by Miss Day as a doubtful reading.

Tapestry band: of pink, yellow, black, and blue silk and undyed linen.
Undeciphered Kufic inscription (.08 high). Background of yellow
guilloche encloses white rabbits on black ovals.
.185 x .16.

15.371. FIGURE 65.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, second half of eleventh century.

Ground: glazed undyed linen cloth.⁹⁵

Tapestry band: of red, blue, yellow, and black silk and undyed linen.
Simulated Kufic inscription (.013 high) of red on blue, yellow, and
black field.
.295 x .13.

15.383. FIGURE 66.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, second half of eleventh century.

Ground: glazed undyed linen cloth.⁹⁵

Tapestry band: of red, blue, yellow and black silk and undyed linen.
Simulated Kufic inscription (.01 high) of red on blue, yellow, and
black field.
.12 x .11.

15.376. FIGURE 67.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, second half of eleventh century.

Ground: glazed undyed linen cloth.⁹⁵ Plain selvage at right.

Tapestry band: of blue, pink, black, green, and yellow silk and undyed
linen. Simulated Kufic inscription (.015 high) of blue on field of
polychrome lozenges.
.28 x .09.

15.440. FIGURE 68.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, second half of eleventh century.

Ground: glazed undyed linen cloth.⁹⁵ Plain selvage at right.

Tapestry band: of red, blue, yellow, and black silk and undyed linen.
Simulated Kufic inscription (.025 high) of blue and red silk enclosing
linen birds on red field.
.175 x .09.

⁹⁵ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

32.117. FIGURE 69.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, second half of eleventh century.

Ground: glazed undyed linen cloth.⁹⁶

Tapestry band: of blue, red, yellow, and black silk and undyed linen.

Simulated Kufic inscription (.02 high) of blue silk enclosing red roundels.

.24 x .155.

15.382. FIGURE 70.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, late eleventh century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. Plain selvage at left.

Tapestry band: of pink, green, blue, black, and yellow silk and undyed linen. Stars,⁹⁷ of pink and linen, on green or blue ovals; and rabbits on pink ovals. Simulated Kufic inscription (.01 high) of linen on pink field.

.52 x .07.

15.532. FIGURE 71.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, late eleventh century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth.

Tapestry bands: of pink, dark-blue, light-blue, green, cream, and yellow silk and undyed linen. Pink or blue stars on cream field. Simulated Kufic inscription (.01 high) of linen on pink field.

.425 x .16.

15.396. FIGURE 72.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, ca. A. D. 1100.

Ground: fine undyed linen cloth. Sewed to coarser linen.

Silk tapestry bands: of red, yellow, light-blue, dark-blue, and green.

Rabbits on blue roundels or red stars, with scroll borders. Lines of Kufic (.01 high) of undyed linen on yellow field; undeciphered.

.20 x .11.

Published:

Kühnel, *Islamische Stoffe*, p. 241n.

⁹⁶ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

⁹⁷ The star motif appears also in figs. 71 and 72. An earlier version is in the Berlin Museums. (Cf. Kühnel, *op. cit.*, plate 2, no. 3110.)

30.697. FIGURE 73.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, *ca.* A. D. 1100.

Ground: blue and white ikat linen cloth.⁹⁸

Tapestry bands: of yellow and red silk and undyed linen. Linen rabbits and geometric forms on red ovals; in yellow guilloche. Lines of Kufic (.003 high) in red on yellow; undeciphered.

.31 x .18.

30.693. FIGURE 74.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, early twelfth century.

Warps: blue and white ikat(?) linen.⁹⁸

Tapestry band: of yellow, pink, green, light-blue, and black silk and undyed linen. Linen rabbits on black or pink ovals; green triangles tipped with pink roundels.

.115 x .065.

30.691. FIGURE 75.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, early twelfth century.

Warps: dark-blue and light-blue linen,⁹⁸ in stripes.

Tapestry band: of red and yellow silk and undyed linen. Two rows of red medallions containing yellow duck; row of linen medallions containing four red roundels with small yellow duck; on yellow lattice. Two lines of debased Naskhi writing, in red on yellow.

.18 x .13.

Inscription: ⁹⁹

نصر من الله

Translation:

“ Victory from God ” (repeated).

32.113. FIGURE 76.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, early twelfth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth.

Tapestry band: of light-blue, dark-blue, green, yellow, black, and cream

⁹⁸ Analyzed by Mr. Young. For ikat, see page 72.

⁹⁹ Read by Miss Day.

silk. Cream birds on yellow roundels.¹⁰⁰ Two lines of Kufic (.013 high) in dark-blue on cream.

.17 x .145.

Inscription: ¹⁰¹

التوفيق بالله

Translation:

" Success is in God " (repeated).

01.5908. FIGURE 77.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, early twelfth century.

Ground: grey-green linen cloth.

Tapestry band: of yellow, green, red, blue, and black silk and undyed linen. Yellow medallions on green, red, and blue quatrefoils. Two lines of Kufic inscription (.01 high) in linen on red field.

.36 x .145.

Inscription: ¹⁰²

جليله

Translation:

" Power " (repeated).

15.370a. FIGURE 78.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, first half of twelfth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth.

Tapestry bands: of pale-yellow, pink, blue, blue-green, and black silk and undyed linen. Black and linen roundels and blue or green dots on yellow band. Borders of S-shaped forms. Lines of simulated Kufic of linen on pink.

.275 x .23.

Published:

Kühnel, *op. cit.*, p. 27m.

30.681. FIGURE 79.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, first half of twelfth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth.

¹⁰⁰ A later version of such designs as in figs. 36 and 37.

¹⁰¹ Read by Miss Day.

¹⁰² Miss Day suggests the alternative reading الله " God " (repeated).

Tapestry bands: of red, blue, light-yellow, and black silk and undyed linen.

.315 x .215.

30.674. FIGURE 80.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, first half of twelfth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth.

Tapestry bands: of yellow, blue, pink, green, and black silk and undyed linen. Blue and cream birds on linen ovals, linen birds on pink ovals, and linen rabbits on black ovals. Lines of Kufic (.015 high) of linen on pink field.

.32 x .32.

Inscription:

جلیله

Translation:

"Power" (repeated).

30.676. FIGURE 81.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, first half of twelfth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. Pieced through center vertically.

Tapestry bands: of red, yellow, blue, green, and black silk and undyed linen. Rabbits and affronted birds on red, green, and blue ovals.

Lines of simulated Kufic (.03 high) of blue on linen.

.46 x .46.

15.602. FIGURE 82.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, first half of twelfth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. Black silk selvage (.007 wide) at both sides.

Tapestry bands: guilloche of yellow, black, and red silk.

.51 x .45.

30.677. FIGURE 83.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, Caliph el Hafiz (A. D. 1130-1149).

Warps: undyed linen.

Silk tapestry: of red, yellow, blue, and black. Four broad bands (.06

wide), sewed together; each edged at top and bottom with a line of debased Naskhi in red on yellow.

.38 x .16.

Inscriptions: ¹⁰³

1. Top band: ... الله الرحمن الرحيم لا اله ...
2. Second and bottom bands: نصر من الله
3. Third band: ... الله و وليه عبد المجيد ابي الميمون ...

Translation:

1. "In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful. There is no god (but Allah). . . ."
2. "Victory from God" (repeated).
3. "... of God and his friend, 'Abd el Majid, Abu'l Maimun. . . ."

31.53. FIGURE 84.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, middle of twelfth century.

Warps: undyed linen.

Silk tapestry band: of yellow, pink, white, and black. Four lines of debased Naskhi (.015 high); two lines of Kufic (.007 high); undeciphered.

.3 x .115.

31.448. FIGURE 85.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, middle of twelfth century.

Warps: undyed linen.

Tapestry band: in red and yellow silk and undyed linen. 1. Kufic inscription (.015 high) of linen on red field. 2. Narrow Kufic inscriptions (.007 high) in red on yellow.

.175 x .045.

Inscriptions: ¹⁰⁴

1. الملك
2. نصر من الله

Translation:

1. "The kingdom" (repeated).
2. "Victory from God" (repeated).

¹⁰³ Read by Miss Day.

¹⁰⁴ Read by Dr. Lamm. An undecipherable letter follows الملك each time it is written

15.760. FIGURE 86.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, middle of twelfth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth. At top, fringe (.01 wide) and two strips of unwoven warps.

Tapestry bands: of red and yellow silk. Debased Naskhi inscription (.007 high) in yellow on red.

.22 x .165 (without fringe).

Inscription: ¹⁰⁵

صر من الله

Translation:

"Victory from God" (repeated).

07.466. FIGURE 87.

TAPESTRY, EGYPTIAN.

Fatimid Period, late twelfth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth, mostly perished.

Silk tapestry: guilloche of red and yellow. Lines of debased Naskhi (.02 high).¹⁰⁶

.61 x .46.

Inscription: ¹⁰⁷

البحر والاموال

Translation:

"Good fortune and prosperity" (repeated).

Miscellaneous Pieces of the Twelfth to Thirteenth Century.

We have now to consider three fragments of fine silk and gold embroidery which are heterogeneous in character and doubtful as to provenance, but which are bound together by the similarity of their technique and their common origin in the late twelfth to thirteenth century.

All three pieces are embroidered with split-stitch in silk, and couched gold. Figure 90 is on a linen ground with brown silk verti-

¹⁰⁵ Read by Dr. Lamm.

¹⁰⁶ Other pieces of this group in the Boston collection are nos. 07.467 and 15.763 (with this same inscription); 07.318, 07.468, 15.373, and 15.764 (inscribed: "Victory from God"); and 07.465 (undeciphered).

¹⁰⁷ Read by Dr. Ettinghausen.

cal and horizontal stripes, and its line of formal Naskhi calligraphy is the very sort of strict Islamic ornament which we should expect during the revival of orthodox restrictions sponsored by Saladin in Ayyubid Egypt (A. D. 1169-1250).

Figure 88 has this same type of ornament, and its line of birds and palmettes might well be a survival of Fatimid design. The fact that the pattern is worked on a cotton ground, however, makes us hesitate to attribute it to Egypt. Cotton was probably introduced into Egypt in the Ayyubid period,¹⁰⁸ but in want of definite evidence, we shall attribute the piece tentatively to Mesopotamia.

Figure 89 is rather more puzzling. It is the design, well-executed but very incomplete, of a woman in a patterned skirt and round gold headdress holding on her arm a brightly-plumaged falcon. Although the ground is of linen, which suggests an Egyptian source, yet the portrayal of a human figure would be impossible in Ayyubid Egypt. The general treatment and colors of the design have a bond with the woven silks which were made in Spain a century or so later. The bell-shaped skirt with its small quatrefoil pattern is reminiscent of figures on Greek vase painting of the fourth to sixth centuries B. C.¹⁰⁹ So that when we seek some source where all such elements might well be merged, we turn to Sicily under the benign Norman rule of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, when Christian-Islamic culture reached its meridian.

31.447. FIGURE 88.

EMBROIDERY, MESOPOTAMIAN OR EGYPTIAN.

Twelfth to thirteenth century.

Ground: glazed undyed cotton cloth.¹¹⁰

Embroidery: of brown, green, and cream silk (in split-stitch and outline-stitch) and gold (membrane wound on yellow silk cord) couched with cream silk. 1. Kufic inscription (.02 high) in hexagon on gold band. 2. Kufic inscription (.005 high) in borders. At top, running scroll of silk and gold.

.21 x .19.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Lamm, *Le Monde Oriental*, *op. cit.*, p. 56, note 4.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. von Falke, *Decorative Silks*, figs. 3 and 4.

¹¹⁰ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

Inscriptions:

1.¹¹¹ العزة لله

2.¹¹² عرو غبطه

Translation:

1. "The glory to god."

2. "Glory and luck" (repeated).

30.682. FIGURE 89.

EMBROIDERY, SICILIAN OR SPANISH.

Twelfth to thirteenth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth.

Embroidery: of green, red, yellow, and dark-blue silk (in split-stitch and outline-stitch) and gold (membrane wound on yellow silk cord) couched with yellow silk. Woman holding a falcon; design perished except for skirt, headdress, and bird.

.203 x .052.

30.684. FIGURE 90.

EMBROIDERY, EGYPTIAN OR MESOPOTAMIAN.

Twelfth to thirteenth century.

Ground: undyed linen cloth with vertical and horizontal stripes of brown silk.

Embroidery: of blue and red silk (in split-stitch and outline-stitch), and gold (membrane wound on yellow silk) couched with yellow silk. Naskhi inscription (.03 high) of gold outlined with red, on blue field; undeciphered.

.23 x .065.

¹¹¹ Read by Dr. Ettinghausen.

¹¹² Read by Dr. Lamm.

SECTION FOUR. THE YEMEN.

The Yemen, the country to the south of the Hedjaz, had an ancient civilization which continued from the time of King Solomon; and at one time, under the reign of the Queen of Sheba (or Saba), it had rivaled Solomon's kingdom in the legends of its wealth. This wealth, coming from the great eastern trade-routes passing from Saba to Syria by land, was greatly diminished when sea-routes opened to the east.¹ With the rise of Islam, the center of interest in Arabia shifted to the north² into the Hedjaz, the district surrounding Mecca and Medina, which was important before the beginnings of Islam as a religious center.

The power and importance of the Yemen then vanished, but a certain political and cultural independence endured, even when it was nominally dominated by the Fatimids. The inhabitants of the Yemen were sufficiently isolated from Egypt to develop a characteristic textile art of their own. Their designs were of the most orthodox Islamic type, not tinged in the slightest with the laxity which marked Fatimid ornament of the period; they consisted mainly of decorative calligraphy, and had no motifs of animals and birds.

As in Mesopotamian textiles, the ground of these pieces is cotton cloth. The device that distinguishes them from other cotton cloth of the time is that the individual warp threads are dyed irregularly with two or more colors before weaving so that, when woven together with a fine binding-weft, the pattern appears in different colors all on the same threads.³ This technique is known as *ikat* or *chiné*.⁴ This method of warp-dyeing might, of course, produce any variety of patterns, but, as it was treated in the Yemen, it formed a material with irregular stripes, changing from brown to blue, from light-blue to dark-blue, and then to white. Islamic writers frequently mention the Yemenite striped stuffs,

¹ Cf. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, chapter 5.

² Cf. Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

³ Cf. Reath, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁴ That an *ikat* ground was used occasionally in Egypt in the Fatimid period is apparent from figs. 73 and 74, but these are of linen.

and we assume that they mean the ikat cottons of the group that we are considering.⁵

On this ikat ground an inscription was then applied, either with crude embroidery in undyed cotton or by a very finished and elaborate painting in gold. The former pieces are best represented by an embroidered ikat tiraz in the Arab Museum, Cairo, whose inscription states that it was made in the private workshop of Sana'a in A. D. 923.⁶

An important example of the painted type of tiraz, in the Nahman collection in Cairo, mentions the name of a tenth century Rassid prince of the Yemen.⁷ Another charming piece, in the Arab Museum, with an inscription painted in blue, gives the date A. D. 913,⁸ and a third piece, in the collection of M. Pfister, mentions a son of el Muntasir.⁹

⁵ Nasiri Khosrau, *op. cit.* (trans. Schefer), p. 191, note 3: "Sana'a is the largest, richest, and most industrious city of the Yemen; her striped coats, stuffs of silk, and embroideries have the greatest reputation."

Mukaddasi (trans. Ranking and Azoo, 1899), p. 149: "Of the specialties of the different parts of this province (Arabia) are the following: . . . the striped stuffs of Sana'a known as *Sa'idi*."

The following story from Sadi's *Gulistan or Flower Garden* (thirteenth century, Persian; trans. by James Ross, 1823, Walter Scott Publishing Co., London) illustrates the fame of the Yemenite stuffs: "I knew a merchant who had 150 camels of burthen and 40 bondsmen and servants in his train. One night he entertained me in his lodging in the island of Keish in the Persian Gulf and continued for the whole night talking idly and saying, . . . 'I have a mind to visit Alexandria, the air of which is salubrious. But that cannot be, for the Mediterranean Sea is boisterous. O Sadi, I have one journey in view, and that once accomplished I will pass my remaining life in retirement and leave off trade.' I asked what journey is that? He replied, 'I will carry the sulphur of Persia to Chin (*sic*), where I have heard it will fetch a high price. Thence I will take China porcelain to Greece, the brocade of Greece or Venice I will carry to India, and Indian steel I will bring to Aleppo. The glassware of Aleppo I will take to Yamin, and with the bardimani or striped stuffs of Yamin I will return to Persia. After that I will give up foreign commerce and settle myself in a warehouse.' He went on in this melancholy strain till he was quite exhausted with speaking. He said, 'O Sadi, do you too relate what you have seen and heard.' I replied, 'Hast thou not heard that in the desert of Ghor, as the body of a chief merchant fell exhausted from his camel, he said, Either contentment or the dust of the grave will fill the stingy eye of the worldly-minded.'"

⁶ No. 9053 (Gob. Exp. Cat. 73); cf. Wiet, *Syria*, vol. 16 (1935), pp. 286-287, plate 48; *Répertoire*, vol. 3, no. 1072. Other embroidered Yemenite tiraz in the Arab Museum are: nos. 9265 and 13014 (Gob. Exp. Cat. 72 and 74); Wiet, *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* (1935), p. 10 (fig.).

⁷ Yussuf ad-Da'i ibn Yahia. Cf. Wiet, *Syria*, *op. cit.*, p. 287; *Répertoire*, no. 1544; *ca.* A. H. 350 (A. D. 962).

⁸ No. 12209 (Gob. Exp. Cat. 78).

⁹ *Ca.* A. D. 860-861. Cf. Pfister, *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79, plate 30 (D 1).

On the painted tiraz in the Boston collection, the calligraphy seems to take two forms. The earlier type, as in figure 91, though simpler, shows the first elements of floriated ornament. These elements, as we can see in figure 92, soon absorbed so completely the letters of the inscription that they became merely a very graceful interlacing of line and curve with little relation to the shape of the original characters. Pieces of this type are naturally difficult to decipher, but in many cases they appear to be merely votive inscriptions.¹⁰

31.962. FIGURE 91.

PAINTED IKAT COTTON, YEMENITE.

Ninth century.

Ground: blue, brown, and white ikat cotton cloth.¹¹

1. Kufic inscription (.04 high) painted in gold with black outline.

2. Similar Kufic inscription (.015 high) running above.

.55 x .365.

Inscriptions: ¹²

1. بركة بركة من الله ل...

2. Undeciphered.

Translation:

1. "Blessing, blessing from God to . . ."

2. Undeciphered.

31.963. FIGURE 92.

PAINTED IKAT COTTON, YEMENITE.

Ninth to tenth century.

Ground: blue, brown, and white ikat cotton cloth.¹¹ Kufic inscription

(.025 high) painted in gold with black outline; undeciphered.

.23 x .225.

¹⁰ See also Arab Museum, nos. 13013 and 12325 (Gob. Exp. Cat. 76 and 77); cf. Wiet, *op. cit.*, plate 48. Other references to Yemenite stuffs are in: Lamm, *Le Monde Oriental*, *op. cit.*, p. 56; Dimand, *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 25 (1930), p. 130, fig. 6 (p. 129); Weibel, *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts*, vol. 12 (1931), p. 97, fig. 7; Lamm, *Nationalmusei Arsbok*, *op. cit.*, pp. 27 and 28, fig. 22 (p. 25); and Day, *Ars Islamica*, vol. 4 (1937), pp. 424-426, no. 4, p. 438, fig. 4.

¹¹ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

¹² Read by Dr. Leo Mayer.

34.115. FIGURE 92.

PAINTED IKAT COTTON, YEMENITE.

Ninth to tenth century.

Ground: blue, brown, and white ikat cotton cloth.¹³ Brown stripe (.08 wide) at right. Fringe at bottom.

1. Kufic inscription (.04 high) painted in gold with black outline.
2. Similar Kufic inscription (.02 high) running above.
3. Similar Kufic inscription (.02 high) in lower left corner.
.79 x .45 (without fringe).

Inscription: ¹⁴

1. . . . اسم الله و صلى الله عليه محمد . . .
2. عز من الله
3. Undeciphered.¹⁵

Translation:

1. "In the name of God. And the blessing of God be upon Muhammad. . . ."
2. "Glory from God."

¹³ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

¹⁴ Read by Dr. Ettinghausen and Miss Day.

¹⁵ Miss Day suggests that this single word may be a place-name. She cites an unpublished textile in the University of Michigan (no. 7549d) which is similarly inscribed with the name of a town in the Yemen.

SECTION FIVE. PERSIA.

The printed or painted silk with roundels, figure 93, is one of a group whose technique is puzzling. In order to present its enigmas, it will be necessary to analyze its composition rather closely. As we have reconstructed this piece, in the photograph, it consists of a loom-width of silk containing four roundels: two at the top and two below, with a portion of a fifth roundel at the bottom. The roundels are arranged on the basis of a vertical turn-over; that is, the lower two roundels are mirrored versions of the upper two. The design has been applied in two styles, which we shall examine separately.

The birds and beasts within the roundels have been applied with blue, yellow, and green dye on the white ground. From the extreme simplification of the pattern it is natural to conclude that the colors were printed with either blocks or stencils, and not painted on with a brush or stylus. If blocks were used, the color would have been rubbed onto the surface of the blocks and thence stamped onto the silk. Three blocks would thus have been necessary, one for each color used. Each block would contain only the part of the design required for the particular color, and each color would essentially cover identical parts in all the roundels. As is evident from the photograph, the colors are distributed differently in the different birds.

When a single stencil is used, the distribution of color need not be identical, as various colors can be applied through the stencil in one process without great difficulty. The division of the design into separate spots of color, none touching, suggests that this was the method used in this piece.

The outside border of the roundels has been painted in intaglio on a blue band. Since the two roundels at the left are identically written, though in reverse (and similarly, the two at the right), it is possible that the thin ground-material was folded and the inscription written with a stylus through the two folds of material. A resist-dye was probably used, which would be impervious to the

blue dye of the band when it was applied later by means of a block or stencil. A flaw in this theory is the accurate position of the inscriptions on the bands; this suggests that the two were applied with one process. The inscription could, of course, have been cut into the block of the band before printing, but the cursive quality of the epigraphy suggests that it was written freely with a brush or stencil, and not cut out. There are arguments in favor of both sides of the question.

The inscription, written in Persian, has not been deciphered. It is a question whether its Naskhi characters are primitive or debased.¹ A similar silk in the Lyons Museum² is probably contemporary with the Boston piece, and there are a few earlier versions in other museums.³

15.815. FIGURE 93.

PRINTED AND PAINTED SILK, PERSIAN.

Eleventh to twelfth century.

Ground: fine undyed silk cloth;⁴ patched together from many pieces.

As mounted, plain selvage at left and right. Large blue printed roundels with an intaglio Persian inscription (.03 high); undeciphered. Within roundels are pairs of affronted birds preying on beasts; printed in blue, brown, green, and yellow on the ground material. Birds or animals in the interstices.

.84 x .72.

¹ Dr. Lamm has compared the epigraphy to that on early bronze mirrors, an example of which is illustrated in Glück and Diez, *Die Kunst des Islams*, fig. 452.

² Cf. d'Hennezel, *Pour Comprendre les Tissus d'Art*, fig. 48.

³ Dr. Volbach has pointed out that similar pre-Islamic silks are preserved in: the Vatican; the Völkerkunde Museum, Berlin; the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin; the Iklé collection, St. Gallen, Switzerland; the Louvre; the Mainz Museum; and the Strassbourg Museum.

⁴ Analyzed by Mr. Young.

BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.¹

		A. H. 132-656		
'ABBASID CALIPHS		capital: Baghdad		
		A. D. 750-1258		
Ism (given name)	Laqab (personal title)	Son of	A.H.	A.D.
Abu Dja'far Harun	Raschid	Mahdi	170	786
.....	.....	.....	193	809
Abu'l Fadl Dja'far	Muqtadir billah	Mu'tadid	295	908
Abu Mansur Muhammad	Qahir billah	"	320	932
Abu'l 'Abbas Ahmad	Radi billah	Muqtadir	322	934
Abu Ishaq Ibrahim	Muttaqi lillah	"	329	940
Abu'l Quasim 'Abdallah	Mustakfi billah	Muktafi	333	944
Abu'l Quasim el Fadl	Muti'lillah	Muqtadir	334	946
.....	.....	.....	363	974
		A. H. 254-292		
TULUNID PRINCES		capital: Katai'		
		A. D. 868-905		
		A. H. 357-567		
FATIMID CALIPHS		capital: Cairo		
		A. D. 969-1171		
Abu Tamin Ma'add	Mu'izz li din allah		341	952
Abu Mansur Nizar	'Aziz billah		365	975
Abu 'Ali el Mansur	Hakim bi amri 'llah		386	996
Abu'l Hassan 'Ali	Zahir		411	1020
Abu Tamin Ma'add	Mustansir billah		427	1035
.....	.....		487	1094
Abu'l Maimun 'Abdalmadjid Hafiz			524	1130
.....	.....		544	1149
		A. H. 567-648		
AYYUBID SULTANS		capital: Cairo		
		A. D. 1171-1250		
		A. H. 650-922		
MAMELUK SULTANS		capital: Cairo		
		A. D. 1252-1519		

¹ Adapted and condensed from: Zambour, *Manuel de Généologie et de Chronologie pour l'Histoire de l'Islam* (Hanover, 1927).

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Figure 1. (37.380)

Mesopotamian. Eighth Century



Figure 2. (34.120)

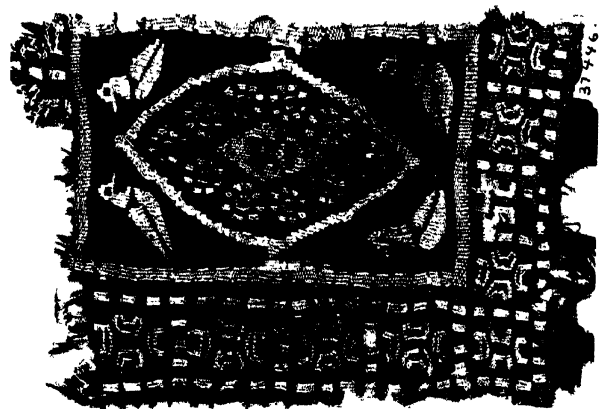


Figure 3. (37.446)

Mesopotamian. Eighth Century

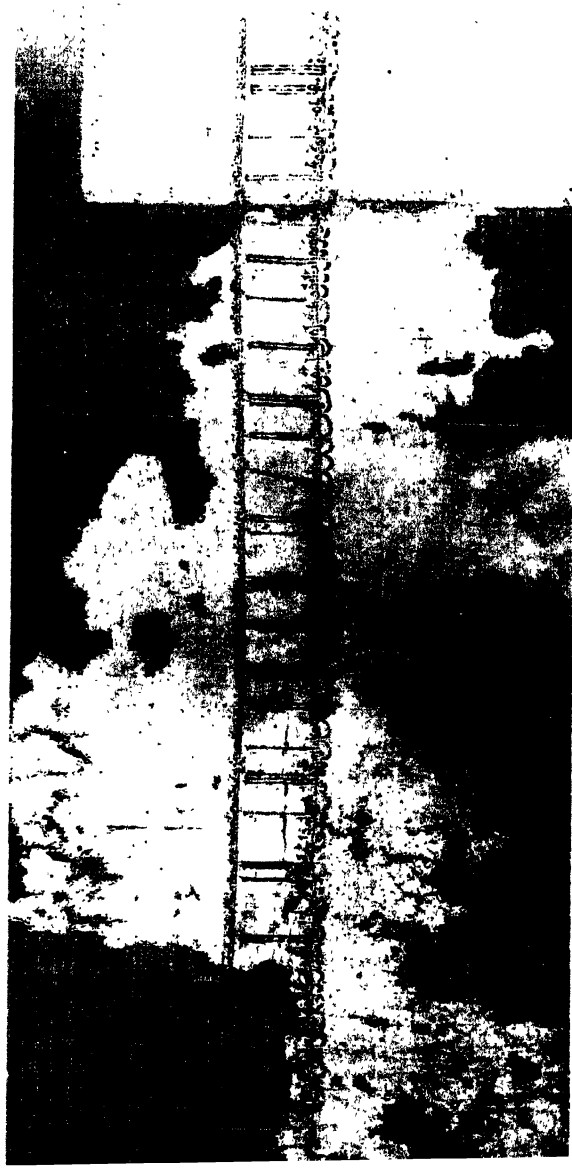


Figure 4. (32.109)
Mesopotamian, Baghdad. A.D. 932.



Figure 5. (31.50)



Figure 6. (31.49)



Figure 7. (31.51)



Figure 8. (31.52)

Mesopotamian. First Half of the Tenth Century



Figure 9. (15.761)
Mesopotamian. First Half of the Tenth Century

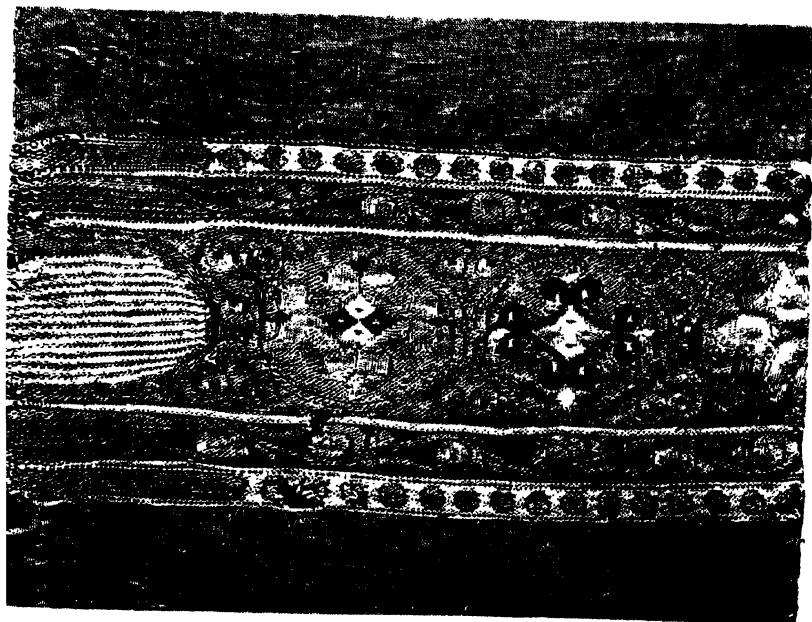


Figure 10. (35.55)
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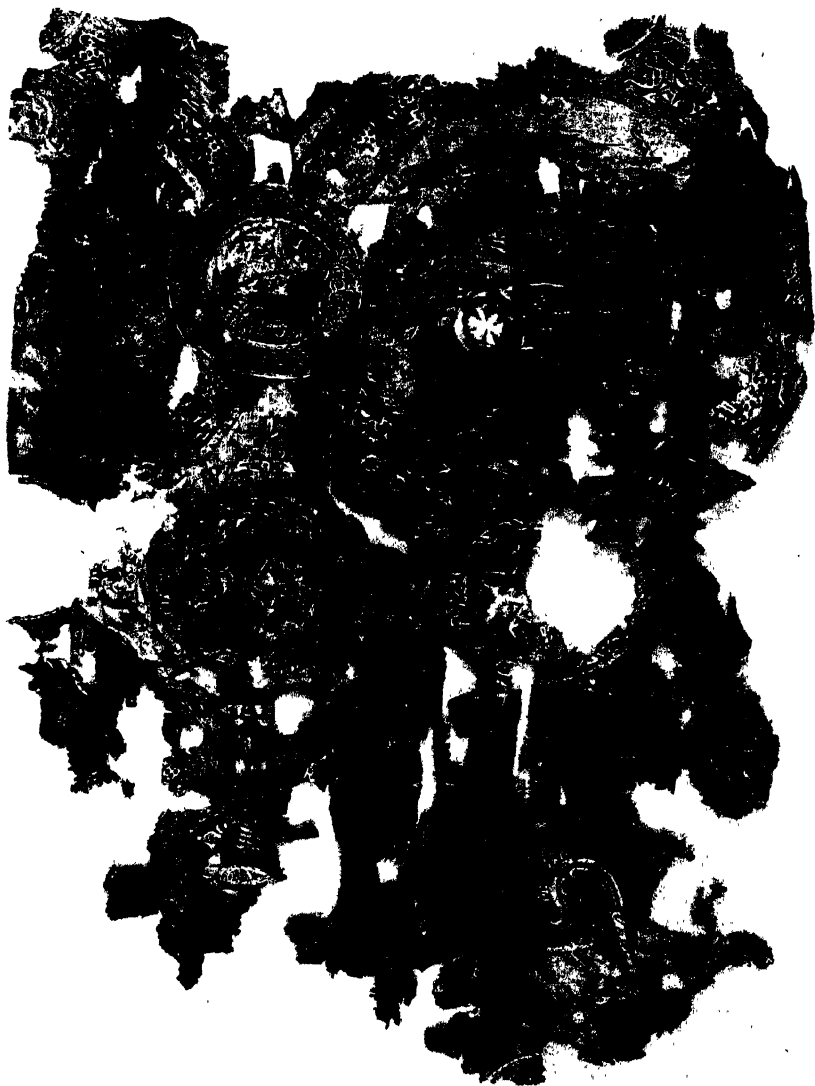


Figure 11. (37.103)

Mesopotamian, Baghdad. Tenth to Eleventh Century



Figure 12. (31.443, 31.444, and 31.445)

Mesopotamian, Baghdad. Tenth to Eleventh Century



Figure 13. (37.447)

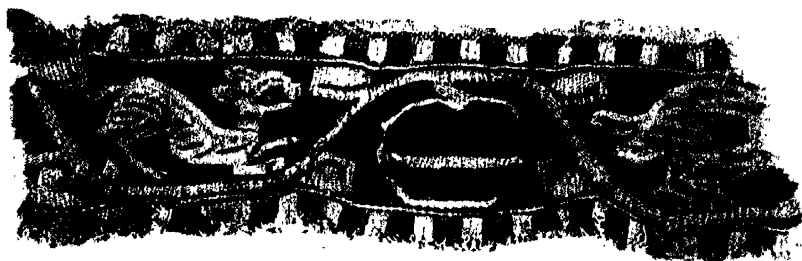


Figure 14. (37.448)

Egyptian Eighth to Ninth Cent

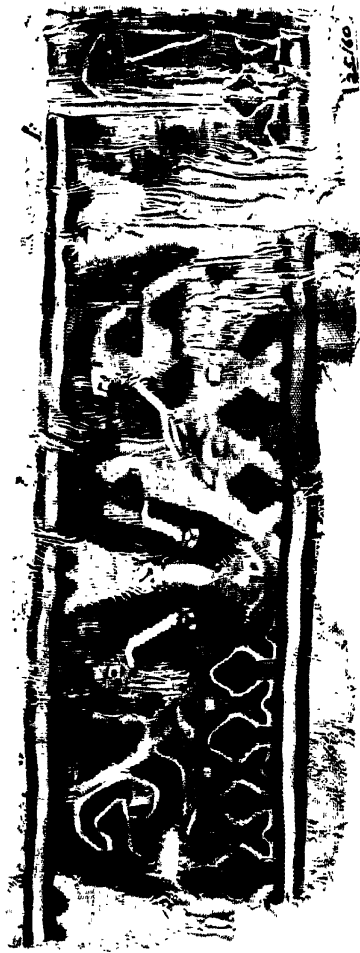


Figure 15. (25.160)

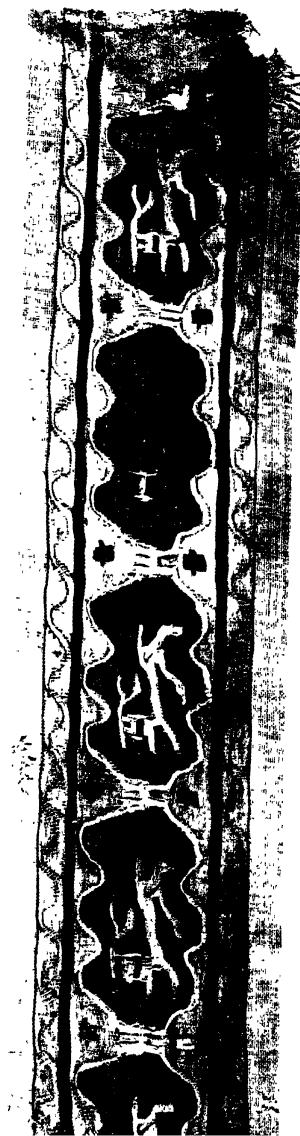


Figure 16. (11.89)

Egyptian. Eighth to Ninth Century

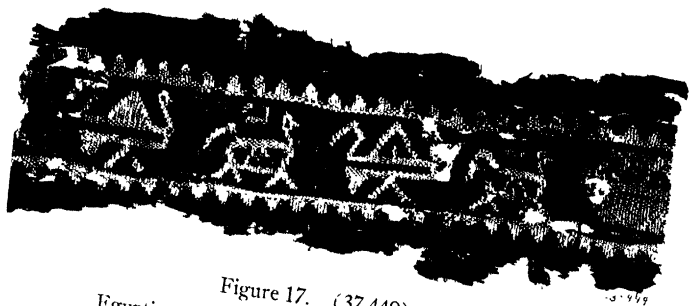


Figure 17. (37.449)
 Egyptian, The Fayoum. Eighth to Ninth Century

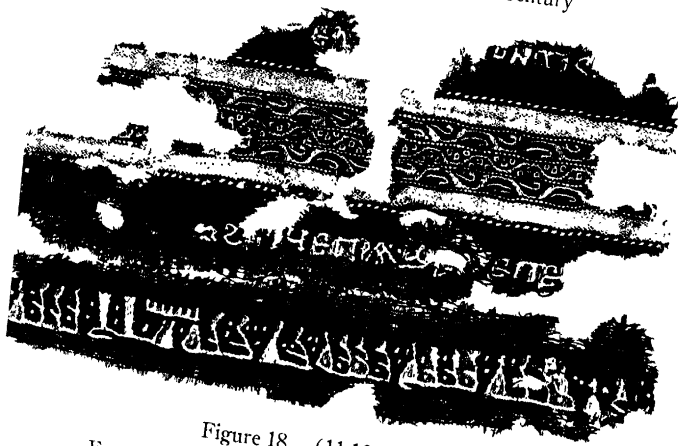


Figure 18. (11.1398)
 Egyptian, The Fayoum. Ninth to Tenth Century

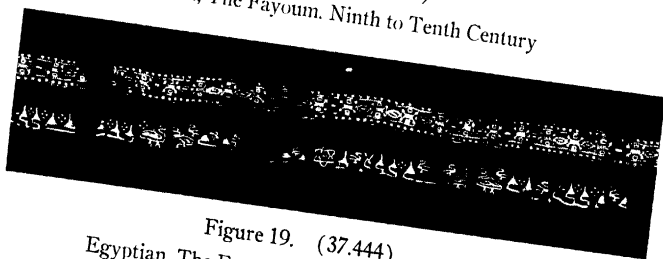


Figure 19. (37.444)
 Egyptian, The Fayoum. Ninth to Tenth Century

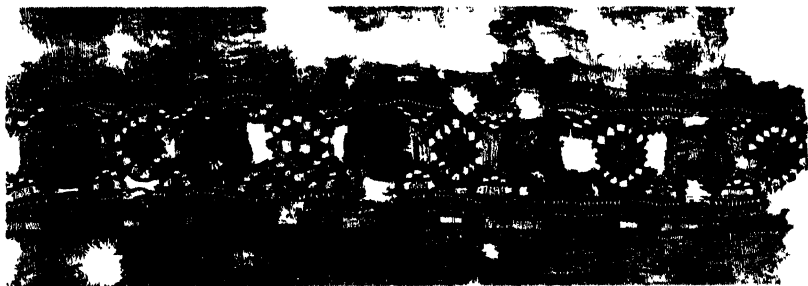


Figure 20. (37.445)



Figure 21. (01.5909)

Egyptian, Upper Egypt. Eighth to Ninth Century



Figure 22. (32.114)



Figure 23. (96.278)

Egyptian, Upper Egypt. Ninth to Tenth Century



Figure 24. (30.687)



Figure 25. (31.59)

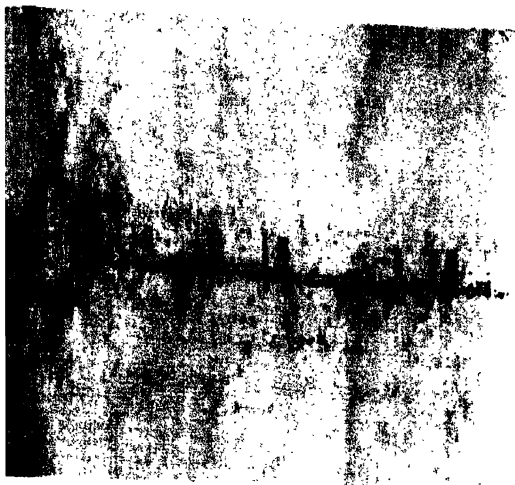


Figure 26. (32.29)



Figure 27. (31.247)

Egyptian. First Half of the Tenth Century

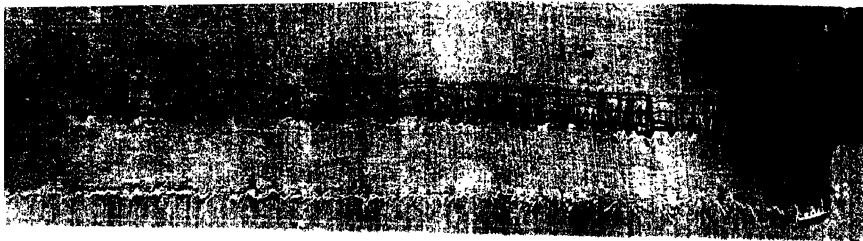


Figure 28. (34.118)

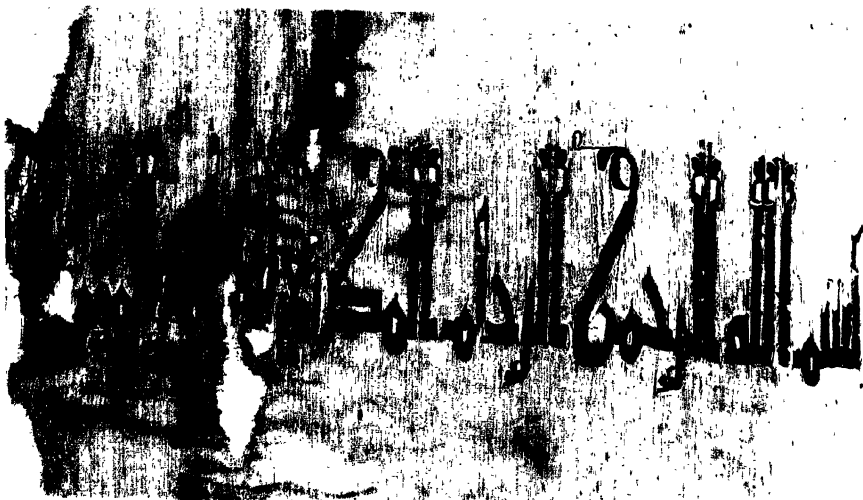


Figure 29. (31.58)

Egyptian. A.D. 946-969.



Figure 30. (31.60)

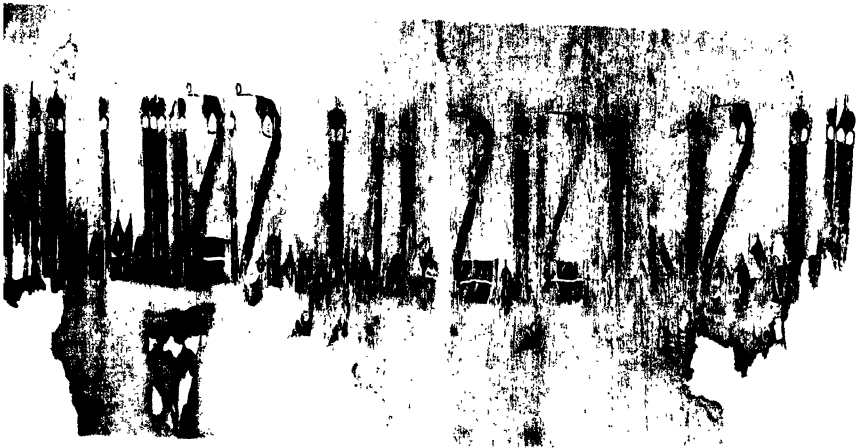


Figure 31. (34.114)

Egyptian. A.D. 946-969.



Figure 39. (32.32)
Egyptian. A.D. 975-976.

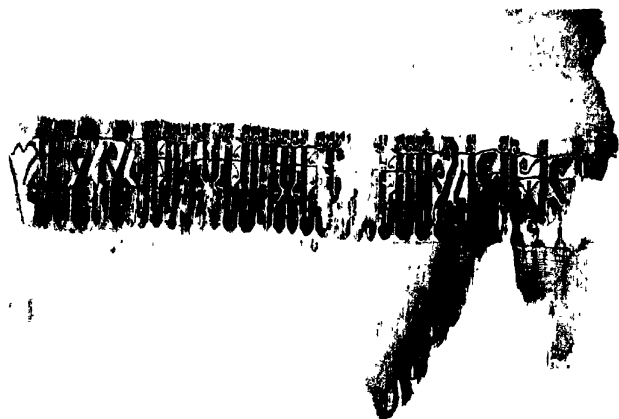


Figure 40. (34.119)
Egyptian. A.D. 996-1020.

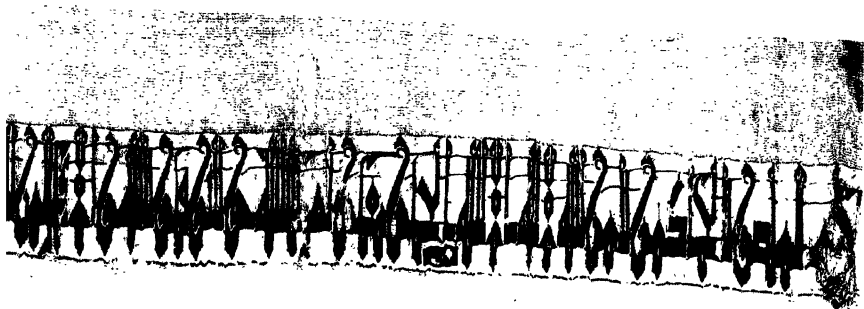


Figure 41. (34.116)

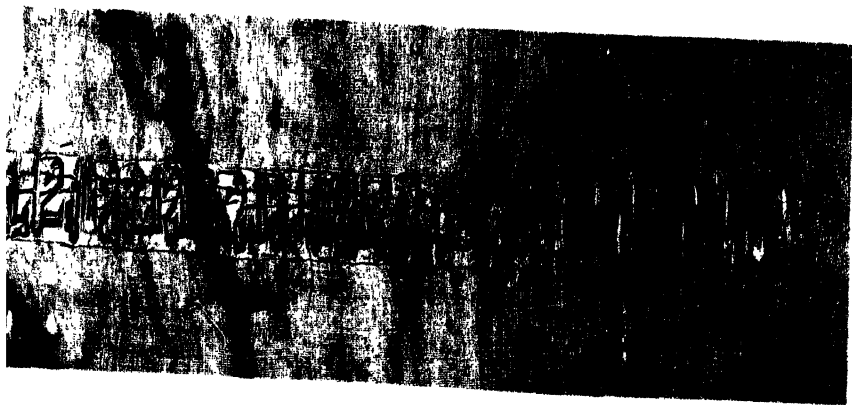


Figure 42. (32.31)

Egyptian. A.D. 996-1020.

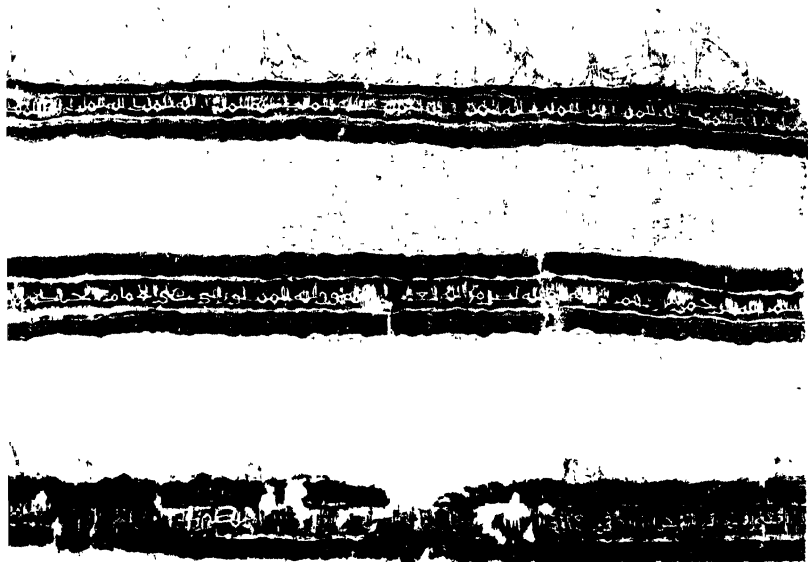


Figure 43. (37.450 a and b)

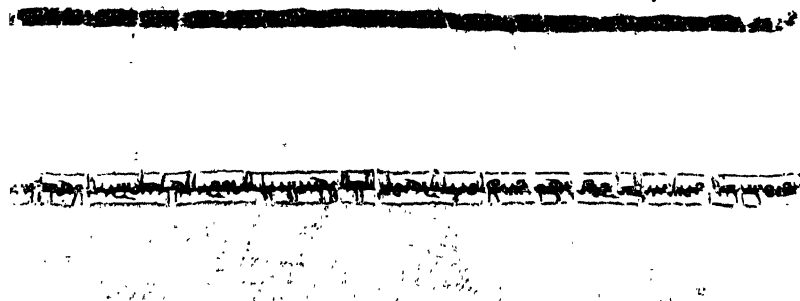


Figure 44. (37.443)

Egyptian. A D 996-1020

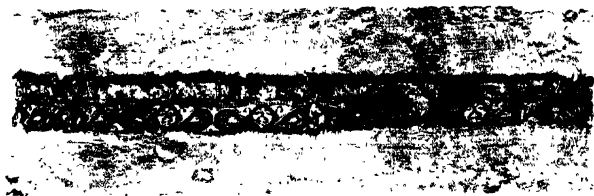


Figure 45. (15.390)



Figure 46. (30.690)



Figure 47. (96.352)

Egyptian. Early Eleventh Century

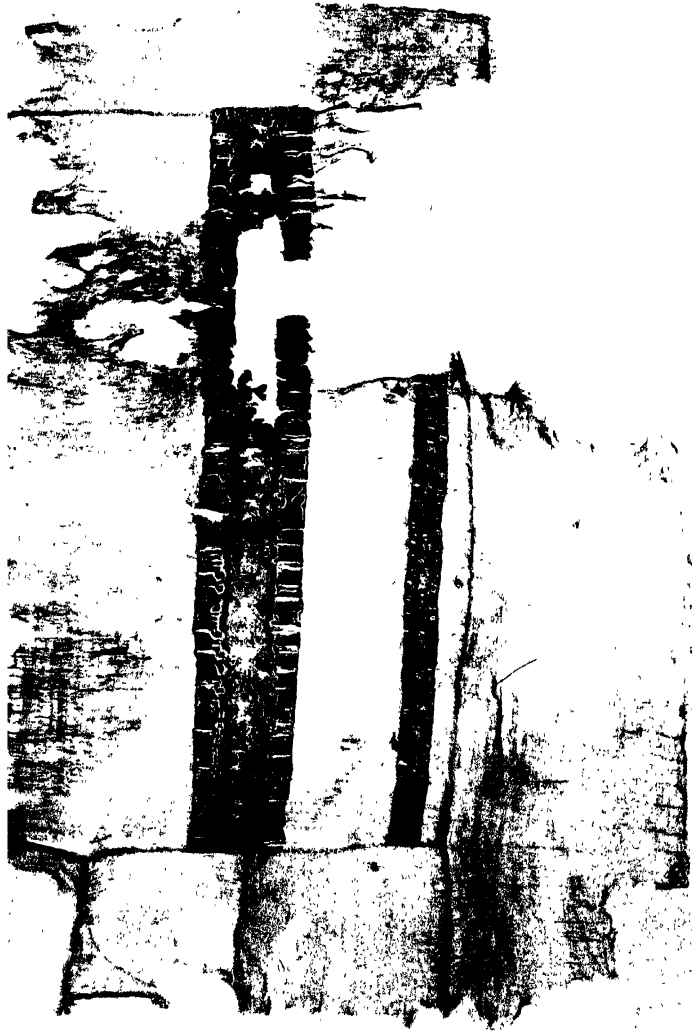


Figure 48. (32.28)
Egyptian. A.D. 1031.



Figure 49. (31.446)



Figure 50. (15.1304)

Egyptian. First Half of the Eleventh Century



Figure 51. (30.696)

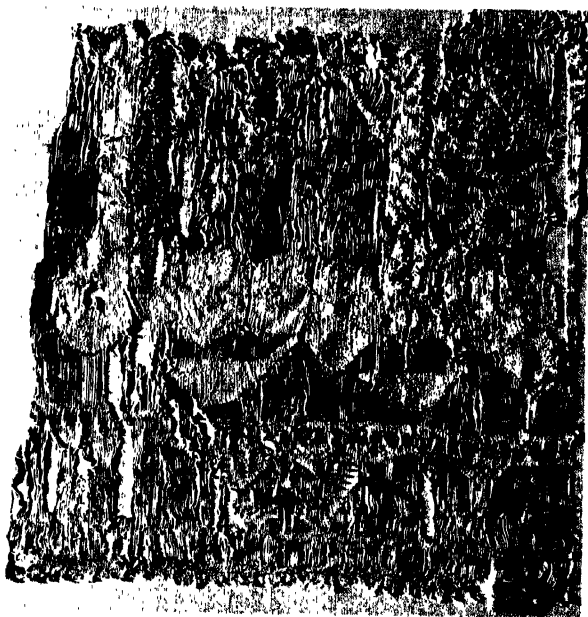


Figure 52. (31.54)

Egyptian. Middle of the Tenth Century



Figure 55. (15.1303)



Figure 56. (30.699)

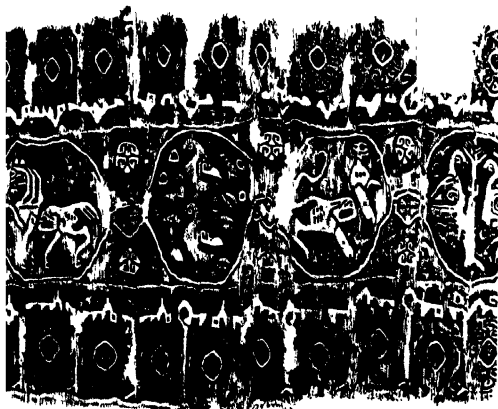


Figure 53. (31.127)



Figure 54. (30.675)

Egyptian. Middle of the Eleventh Century



Figure 57. (30.694)



Figure 58. (30.702)

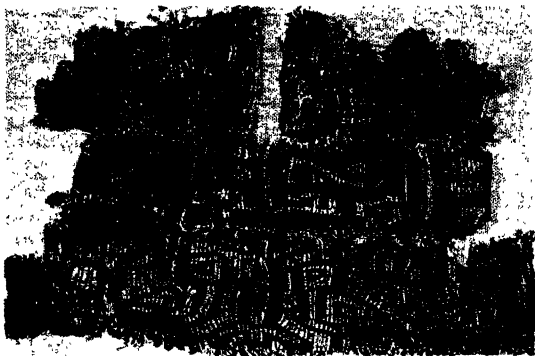


Figure 59. (30.692)

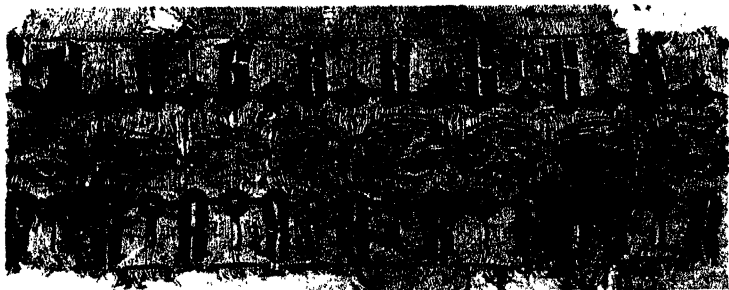


Figure 60. (32.30)



Figure 62. (30.689)



Figure 61. (30.695)

Egyptian Middle of the Eleventh Century

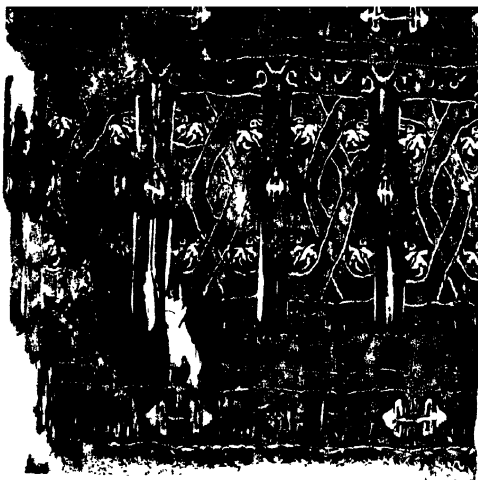


Figure 64. (30.679)

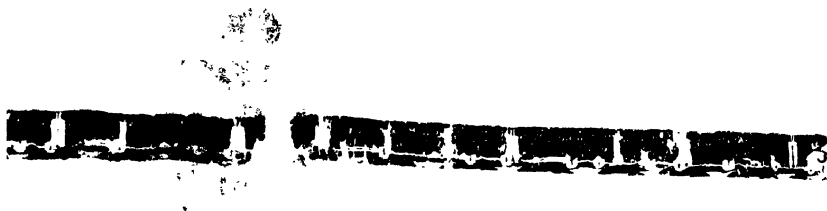


Figure 63. (31.55)

Egyptian. Second Half of the Eleventh Century



Figure 65. (15.371)



Figure 66. (15.383)



Figure 67. (15.376)

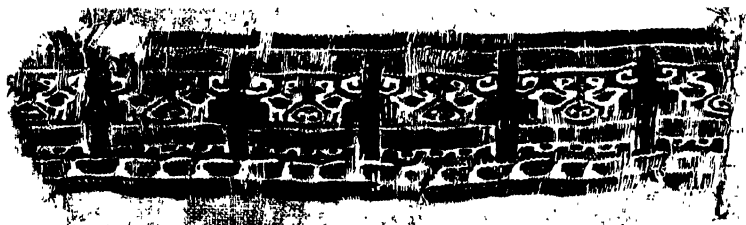


Figure 68. (15.440)

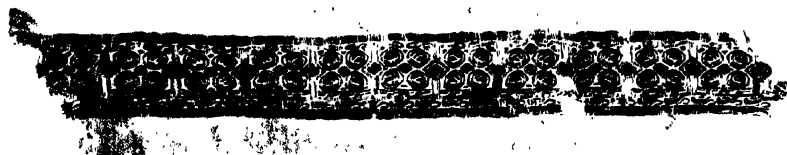


Figure 69. (32.117)



Figure 72. (15.396)



Figure 71. (15.532)

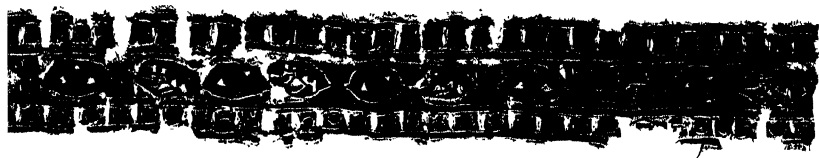


Figure 70. (15.382)

Egyptian. Late Eleventh Century



Figure 74. (30.693)

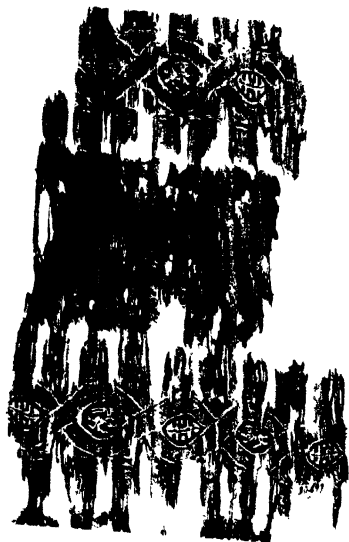


Figure 73. (30.697)



Figure 75. (30.691)

Egyptian. Early Twelfth Century

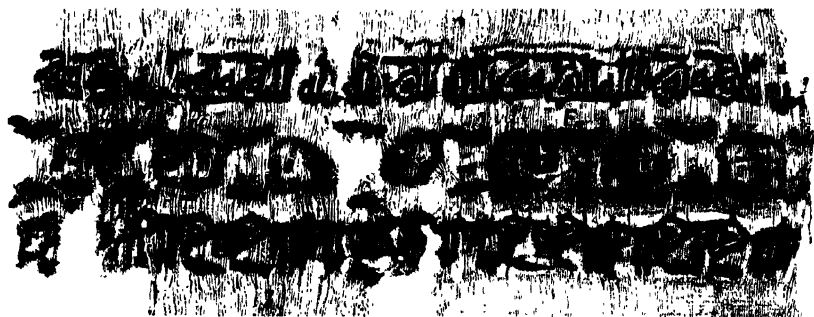


Figure 76. (32.113)

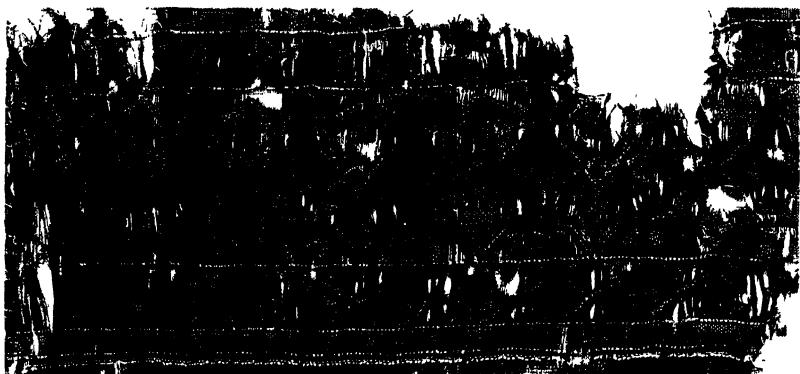


Figure 77. (01.5908)



Figure 78. (15.370a)

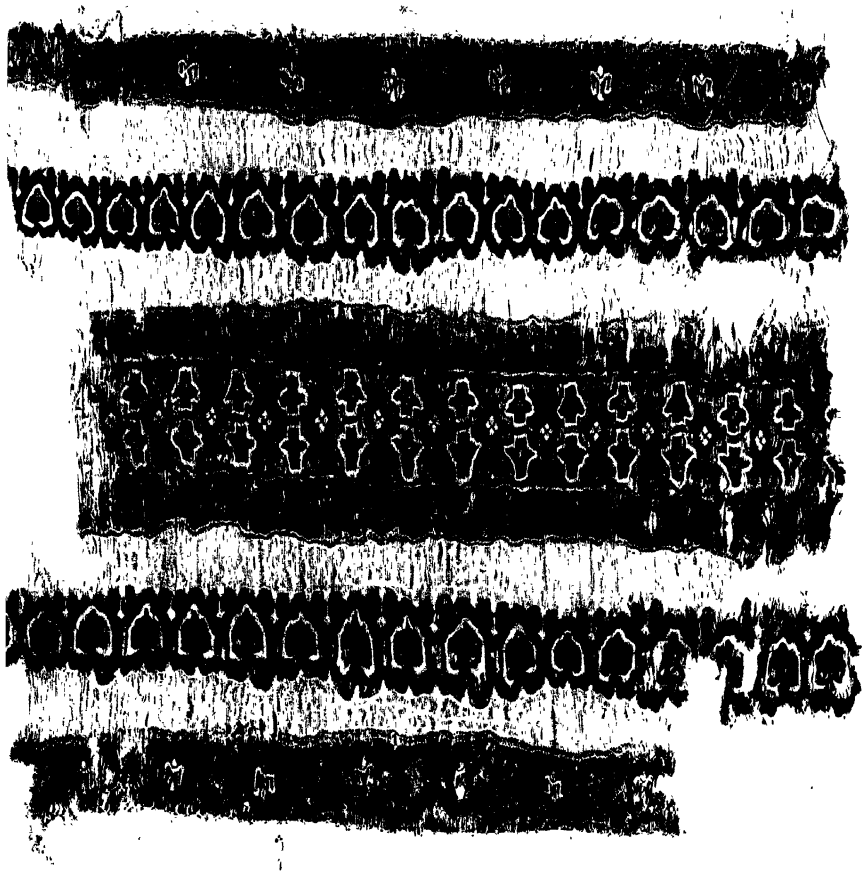


Figure 79. (30.681)

Egyptian. First Half of the Twelfth Century

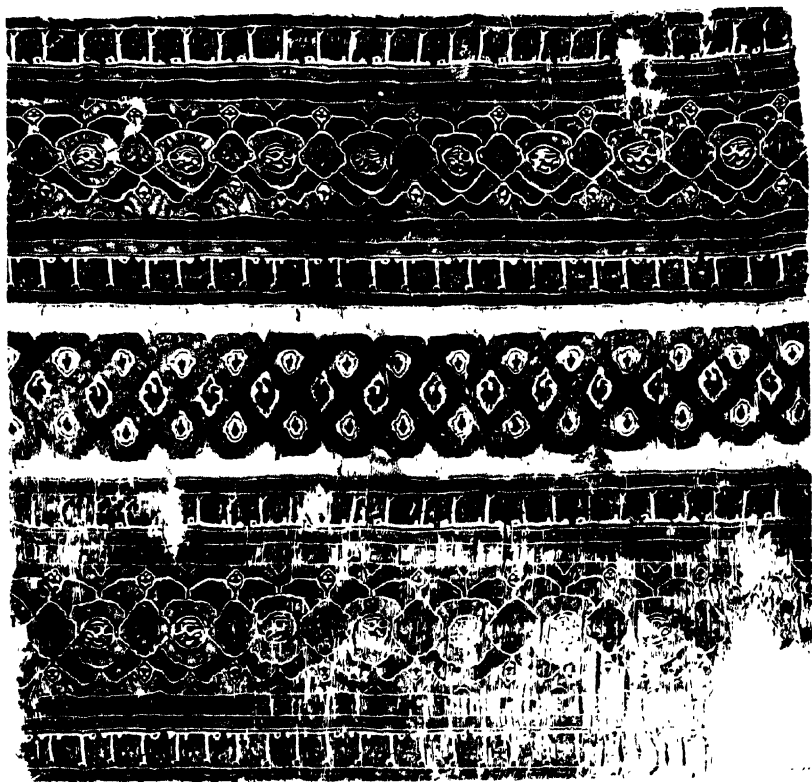


Figure 80. (30.674)

Egyptian. First Half of the Twelfth Century

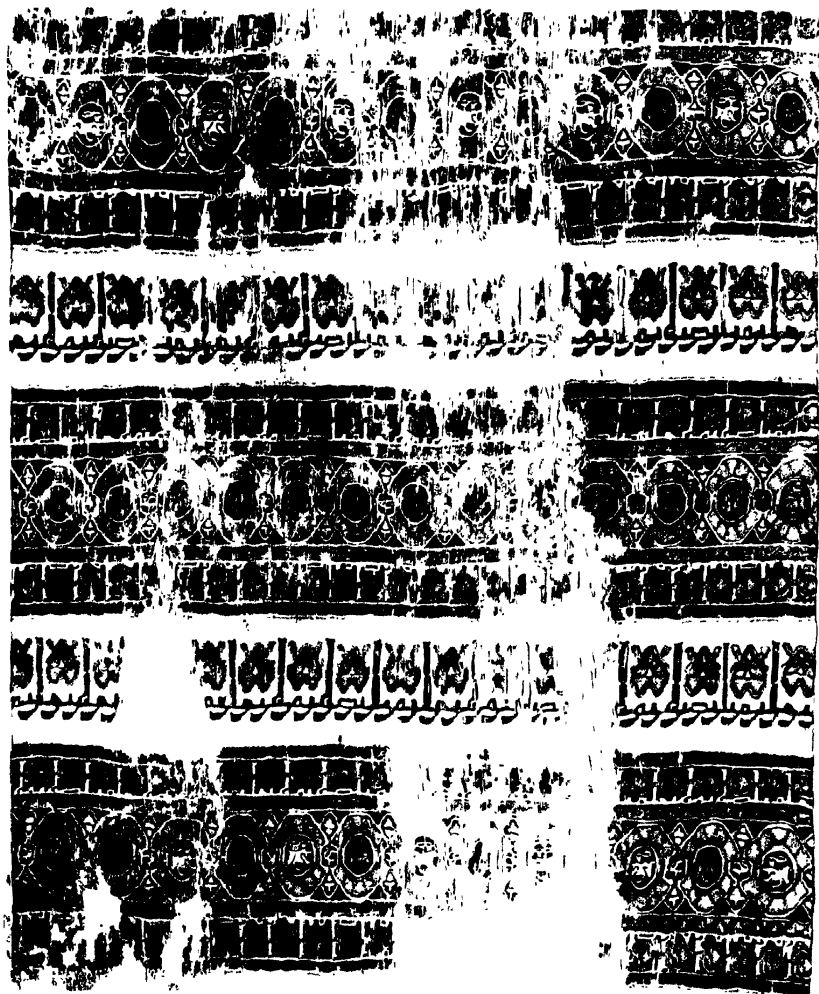


Figure 81. (30.676)

Egyptian. First Half of the Twelfth Century

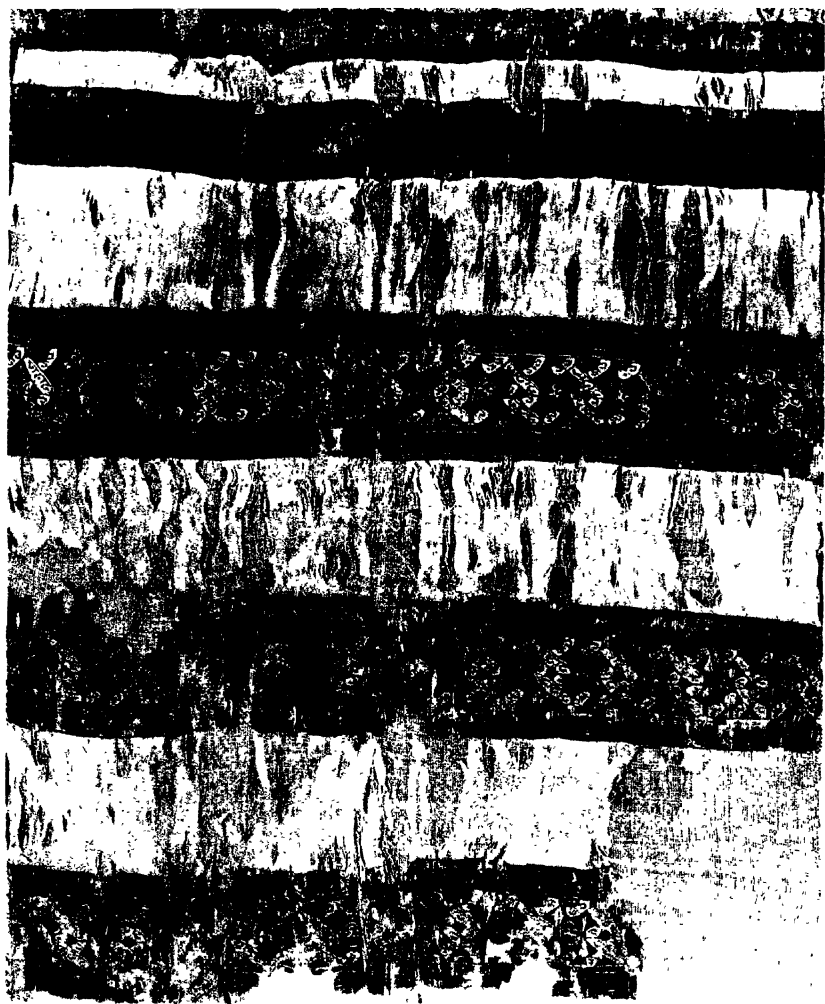


Figure 82. (15.602)

Egyptian. First Half of the Twelfth Century



Figure 83. (30.677)



Figure 84. (31.53)



Figure 85. (31.448)



Figure 86. (15.760)



Figure 87 (07 466)



Figure 90. (30.684)
Egyptian or Mesopotamian



Figure 88. (31.447)
Mesopotamian or Egyptian



Figure 89. (30.682)
Sicilian or Spanish

Twelfth to Thirteenth Century

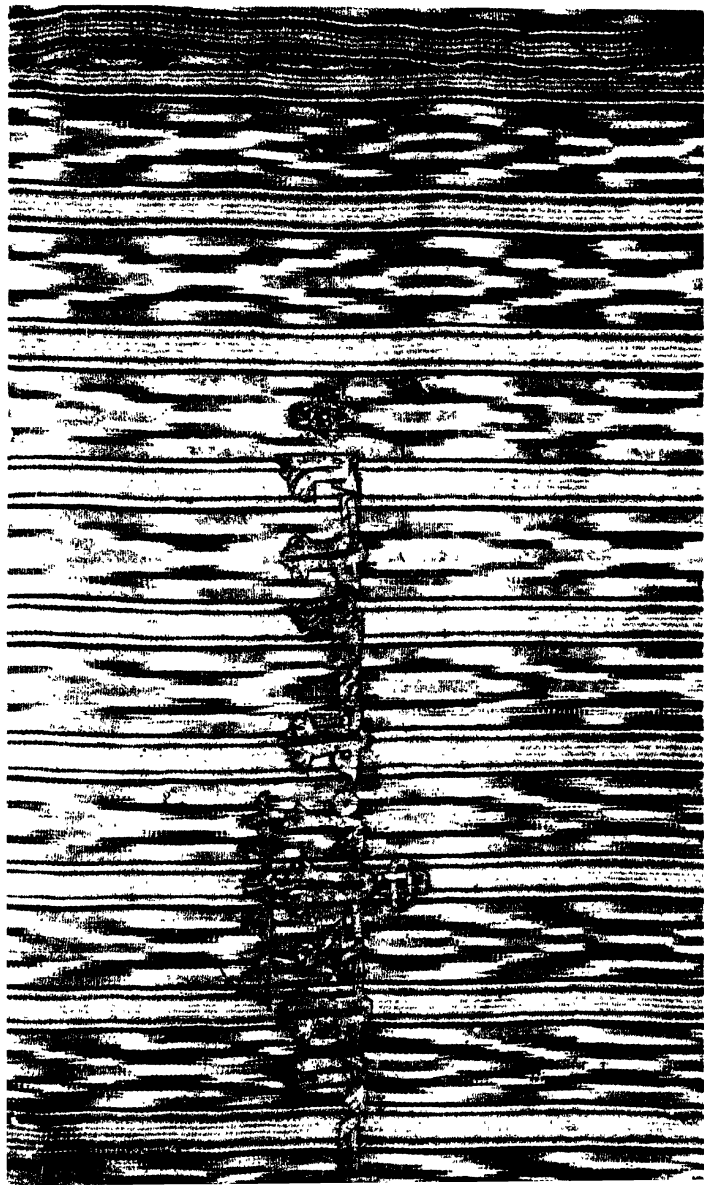


Figure 91. (31.962)

Yemenite. Ninth Century

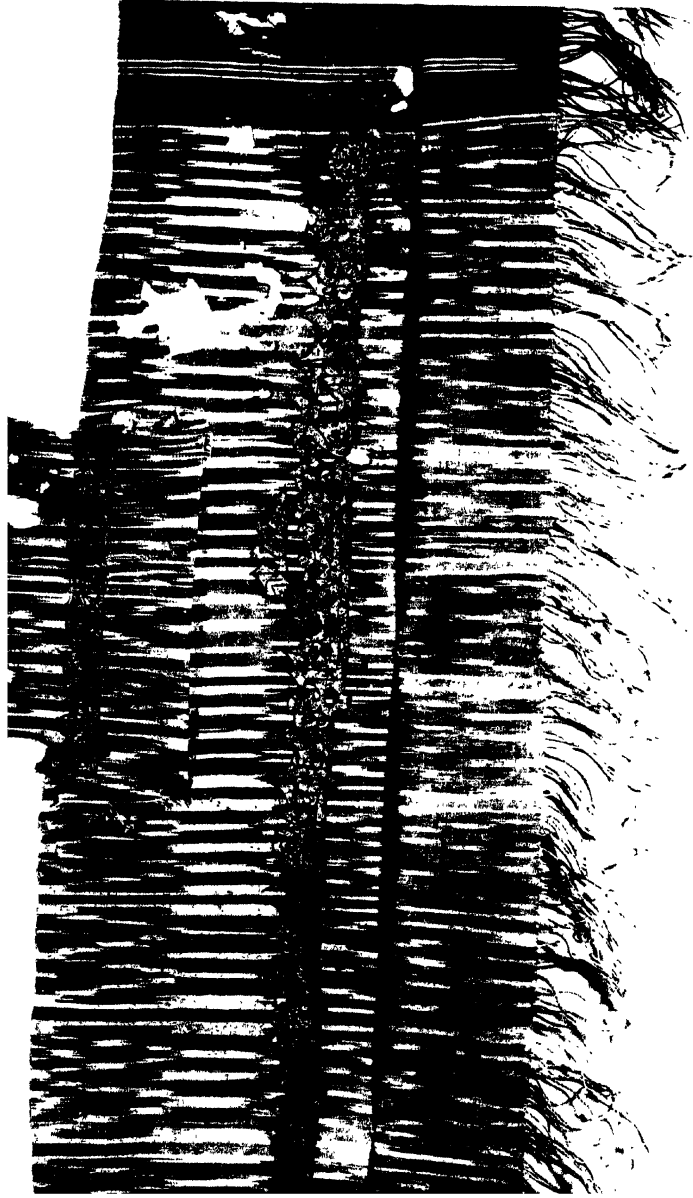


Figure 92. (31.963 and 34.115)
Yemenite. Ninth to Tenth Century



Figure 93. (15.815)

Persian. Eleventh to Twelfth Century



Figure 94

Tapestry Fragment
Egyptian Eighteenth Dynasty (1580-1350 B.C.)
Courtesy of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo



Figure 95

Carved Wood
Egyptian. Middle of the Eleventh Century
Courtesy of the Arab Museum, Cairo



Figure 96



Figure 97



Figure 98

Ceramics Fragments
 Egyptian. Eleventh to Twelfth Centuries
Courtesy of the Arab Museum, Cairo

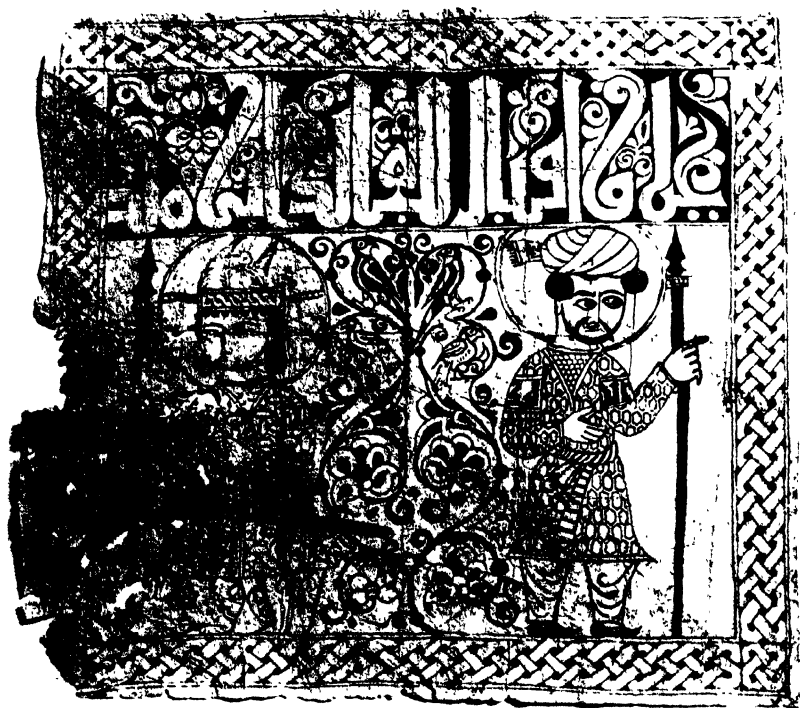


Figure 99

Manuscript Page
Egyptian. Eleventh to Twelfth Century
Courtesy of the Arab Museum, Cairo



Figure 100

Manuscript Page
Mesopotamian, Baghdad. A.D. 1237.
Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

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